

THE JESSE JAMES STORIES

A WEEKLY DEALING WITH THE DETECTION OF CRIME

Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2 50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y.

No. 24.

Price, Five Cents.



"HANDS UP, SHERIFF! HANDS UP, EVERYBODY!" ROARED THE VOICE OF JESSE JAMES.—(CHAPTER XXXVIII.)

THE JESSE JAMES STORIES

A WEEKLY DEALING WITH THE DETECTION OF CRIME

Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the N. Y. Post Office, by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y. Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1901, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C.

No. 24.

NEW YORK, October 19, 1901.

Price Five Cents.

Jesse James' Exploits.

By W. B. LAWSON.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE LORDSBURG STAGE.

"Drop them lines! Move a muscle and you're a deader, Pete Cole! Now, then, throw up your hands and kick out that cash-box! I'm Jesse James, the outlaw, and I mean business!"

The order came from a man perched upon a rock just at the entrance to a narrow pass on the Lordsburg stage route. He was wearing a white mask, and, outlined against the blue Arizona moonlight, he looked like a giant.

Pete Cole, driver of the Lordsburg stage, promptly obeyed orders, kicking the Wells-Fargo box from under the seat clear across six feet of space, and landed it at the feet of the robber.

"Frank, take a look inside and see if there are any passengers," went on the outlaw, coolly; "and you, Pete, get down and make tracks for that bunch of mesquite yonder! Look back and I'll plug you full of holes! I'll drive the stage into Lordsburg myself, and no reflection on your reputation, either!"

He chuckled as he said the last words, and as the driver sprang promptly from his seat, without lowering his arms an inch from their original position, he turned a

quick glance upon the second outlaw, who had his head inside the stagecoach window.

"How many passengers, Frank?"

Frank James, brother of the famous bandit, drew his head from the window as he replied:

"Only one, Jess, and this a woman. She's too scared to move! Shall I go through her pockets?"

"No. Let her alone! If she hasn't a weapon she can't do any damage, and we may as well let her continue her journey!"

As he spoke his brother sprang upon the rock and helped him smash the cash-box.

Jesse James kept one eye upon the driver, who was striding obediently toward the mesquite, and then roared a peremptory "whoa" to one of the leaders, that was growing restive.

A second later he was on the box of the stage, and his brother, after gathering up about two hundred dollars in gold dust, crawled inside of the old vehicle, where he found the solitary passenger still trembling with terror.

"Oh, sir! What has happened?" she asked, as Jesse James cracked the long whip and the coach started off with a bump and a rattle.

"Nothing much! Jesse James has held up the driver

THE JESSE JAMES STORIES.

and corraled the strong-box," was the answer, as the second greatest outlaw in the country hid the specie bags somewhere in his capacious pockets.

A feminine shriek of alarm followed this bit of information; then the lone passenger suddenly flung back a thick veil and revealed a face of astonishing beauty.

"By the eternal! I thought you were an old woman!" blurted the outlaw, admiringly. "Hanged if you ain't as pretty as a peach, and in your teens, too, I reckon! Where did you come from, and where are you going?"

He leaned forward as he spoke, and another jolt of the coach nearly cracked their heads together.

"How dare you, sir!" exclaimed the young woman, drawing back with dignity. "How dare you question a lady, you infamous robber!"

"Ha! ha! The manners of a queen! They go well with your face, miss! So you don't intend to answer my question?" was the reply, in a jovial voice.

The woman bit her lips and did a little thinking, for it had flashed through her mind that she was in a desperate position.

Ill-fortune had decreed that she should be the one passenger in the stage at that unlucky hour, and to be alone with two reckless desperadoes in one of the loneliest spots in Arizona was an experience which called for not only courage, but cleverness.

In her pocket was a package of papers of great importance, and which had been intrusted to her by no less high an official than the United States marshal himself, and which she was expected to deliver to certain parties in Lordsburg.

Another look at the glaring white mask opposite her made her set her teeth with determination.

"He shall not have them!" she thought. "I'll defy them both! Oh, if I only knew what to do!"

Another look at the white mask, behind which two not unkindly eyes were gazing at her attentively, made her change her plan a little, and a second later, womanlike, she did the very best thing which she could possibly have done under the circumstances.

Removing a pair of black gloves, and drawing out a tiny handkerchief, she put her hands before her face and burst out crying.

In a second Frank James had one of her hands in his, and was patting it gently.

"There! there! Don't cry, little girl! You're as safe

this minute as you have been any minute since you started! There's no end of bandits about who might hold up Pete Cole, but no one is likely to bother this craft while Jess is on the box! That white mask of his will strike terror to the soul of every cutthroat in this section!"

"Who are you?" asked the girl, suddenly.

"Frank James."

"That man's brother?"

Frank James nodded.

"Did—did he kill the driver?"

"No—just left him behind. He'll have a thirty-five-mile walk to get to Lordsburg," chuckled the outlaw.

"Is that where he is taking the stage?"

Frank James glanced out of the window just as a yell from Jesse James and a sudden lurch of the stage showed that they were rounding a perilous corner.

"I reckon Jess thinks it's too far to Lordsburg. He's turned into the Dead Valley route. Don't be frightened, miss; I said I'd protect you, and I can easy send you to Lordsburg from Dead Valley to-morrow."

"But why do we go to Dead Valley?" persisted the girl, as the stage kept up its bumping and bouncing.

Frank James took another look out of the window into the moonlight, and then betrayed a confidence.

"There's swag at the valley, lots of it, and Jess and I have just got wind of it."

"You mean the miners' money?"

"Yes, the copper fellows. We've learned that a month's wages all around came by Wells-Fargo yesterday, and as it wasn't in this stage, it's sure to be somewhere else, and that's the secret we've found out. It's in the codfish!"

"You mean its hidden in the supplies for the miners?"

"Yes. That's the way they transport it from the railroad. Sometimes in bales of dry goods, but oftener in the codfish!"

"Then all you have to do is to hold up the ox teams!"

The outlaw chuckled, and patted the little hand admiringly.

"That's it! A dead easy 'lay.' Almost too easy! There should be five thousand in the haul and that's a whole lot for Arizona."

Another bump of the stage was followed by a series of yells from the driver, and then, amid much backing and sidling of the horses, a dead halt was effected.

THE JESSE JAMES STORIES.

3

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE TWO PRISONERS.

"What's the matter?" asked Frank James, putting his head out of the window.

A volley of oaths from Jess came back to him; then he was able to make out the forms of two men, who were hugging the boulders on the right of the path in a desperate effort to keep out of the way of the horses.

"They say they've been held up and robbed of everything, pistols and all," explained the outlaw on the box, as soon as he had his team in subjection. "They want a free ride to the valley, Frank. I reckon they're natives, and they might give us some information."

"Who held 'em up?" asked Frank James, curiously.

"A fellow wearing a white mask," chuckled Jesse James. "I reckon it was Prairie Pete; he should be in this section."

"Let me have a look at 'em," said Frank again, as he jumped from the coach and edged his way close to the two figures, with his finger on the trigger of his weapon.

"Yer won't see nothin' ter worry yer much, stranger," said one of the men, sullenly. "We're copper miners thet's fell in with one er ther James gang, an' been robbed of our pops. Yer belong ter ther same crew yuselves, I reckon, by them thar white rags. Waal, ef thar's ennything left on us thet's wuth stealin', yer welcome to it!"

Frank James satisfied himself that they were weaponless before he answered; then he moved back to the stage and held the door open.

"One of you can get in here, and the other can go on top," he said, gruffly. "You may be miners, and you may not; we're not taking any chances, but I warn you to be careful of your language, for there's a lady aboard. Jess can do all the swearing that's needed to run this craft, and——"

"By ther livin' eternal! Thet thar ain't Jesse James, now is it, stranger?"

"Jest get aboard, gentlemen, and don't keep the stage waiting," interrupted Frank. "Is there any particular spot where you'd like us to leave you 'twixt here and Dead Valley?"

He looked up at his brother as he spoke, but the two men appeared not to notice it. They were apparently hesitating about trusting themselves in such company.

"Jump up if you're comin', and be quick about it!" ordered Jesse James as he touched the leaders. "This coach is running on schedule, and can't stand any foolin'! You're welcome to the ride. It won't cost you anything!"

The men scrambled up, one to the box and the other to the step; then the latter gave a quick cry, and stood in the doorway peering into the vehicle at the lonely female.

The young girl had drawn her veil on her face again, so he could not see her features, but after that first glance he recovered himself, and, scrambling into the stage, took the seat directly opposite her.

Frank James was about to follow him, when the rear horses shied violently, and he was thrown to the ground, without, however, receiving any injury.

It was a minute before he could get back, and in that minute something happened inside of the stage that would have produced serious results had the two outlaws seen it.

The young woman pushed aside her veil, and the two occupants of the stage stared hard at each other.

"You are Mrs. Will Star! I knew you instantly," whispered the man.

"Yes, and you are Mr. Brant, from the Pinkerton agency," murmured the girl, promptly. "Will is waiting for me at Lordsburg, and expected you to join him there. This is a dreadful position you are in at this minute!"

"It is a strange one, surely. No two detectives on the track of Jesse James were ever in a more aggravating position. We have these men in our power, and yet we are helpless."

There was no time to say more, for Frank James climbed in, swearing like a pirate, finding the two occupants of the stage shrinking back in their respective corners.

Jesse James cracked his whip, and once more the coach began its rocking and bumping, for the path to Dead Valley was anything but a smooth one.

To two occupants of the vehicle the ride was the strangest one on record, for they were seated beside the very men whom they had been sent to that section to kill, yet neither of their intended victims even guessed their errand.

The young woman, who was the bride of a brother detective, kept her wits about her, and did not betray her knowledge by a word or look, and as the outlaws rode on

the three answered innumerable questions and made themselves as agreeable traveling companions as possible.

What Jesse James would do with them when they reached Dead Valley, or whether they were even destined to arrive there at all, they could not guess.

Jesse James had a reputation for being as cunning as he was cruel, so beneath his outward civility there might be some hideous scheme lurking.

He had the advantage over them of having his features hidden, so they could not even read the expression upon his face and determine for themselves what the chances were for ultimately escaping with their lives from his and his brother's clutches.

They had hardly recovered from the chagrin of being surprised and held up by Prairie Pete when they fell in with the James brothers, and the two pieces of ill-luck together made them think that for the time, at least, the fates were against them.

CHAPTER XXXV.

A DETECTIVE'S DOOM.

The stage bumped along a couple of miles, with the moon dropping lower in the sky and the air proving icy.

Arriving at the darkest, loneliest spot on the route, Jesse James brought the horses to a standstill, and, standing up, put his fingers to his lips and gave a long, shrill whistle.

Three mounted men, wearing white masks, appeared like magic from behind the rocks, and a brief conversation took place between them.

"Is that you, Pete?"

"Yep, it's me, cap'n! Hi thar! Whoa yer horse!"

"Go easy with that horse, Pete! He ain't used to niggers! What's the news? Have you been to the valley?"

"I've been as nigh thar as ther law'll allow! Ther valley's quiet, cap'n! Ther men expect ther pay to-morrow or next day, an' Mink Taylor says ther dust'll be in ther grub all right. Ther thing now is ter locate ther wagon. Thar's three mule teams an' a couple ox carts goin' ter meet ther express," was the answer.

"Is Mink doing all right?"

"Haw! haw! I reckon yer'll think so when yer see him! He put me on ter a couple er galoots thet was follerin' ther P'isen trail ter Lordsburg, an' I 'low they

won't fergit ther white mask gang soon! I pinched a pair of good pops—it was all they had about 'em!"

"Curse you! One o' them weapons is mine!" broke in the detective on the box, who looked like a typical copper miner.

"Hello! Jess hez overhauled ther two jays and giv 'em er free ride!" bawled one of the other riders. "Haw haw! Thet thar looks like as if Jess was gettin' religion or somethin'! Now, what in thunder be yer goin' ter do with 'em?"

The last was said to the bandit king, who was getting down from the box, with the lines in his hand, to prevent his companion from getting hold of them.

"None of your business what I'm going to do with them!" he said, brusquely. "Here, Wing Shot, give me a hand to get rid of these horses! Shoot the four behind, but save the leaders!"

"We're within easy distance of the valley now," he continued, "and the Lord knows we don't want to be bothered with the stage any longer!"

"But I've promised to send this lady to Lordsburg," said Frank, getting out.

Four cracks of a revolver was the only reply as Jesse James coolly ended the existence of the four rear animals.

The two detectives, knowing that they had five desperadoes, instead of two, to deal with, were obliged to look on and grind their teeth in silence.

"Now, then, let our passengers shift for themselves," said Jesse James, coolly. "We've got business to attend to and we can't waste time here. If they don't like our ways, there's another alternative—they can join the James gang and swear allegiance!"

He glanced sharply at the two men, who were standing close together, as he spoke, and Frank Brant, who was disguised to look like a man of fifty, shifted his feet uneasily as he answered:

"I reckon now we ain't above helpin' yer, Jess, if yer'll be fair on ther divvy," he said, slowly. "What's ther deal, anyhow? Layin' fer ther men's salaries, ain't yer?"

"There's nothing else to lay for in this section," was the answer, as the outlaw's hand dropped to the butt of his pistol.

"Waal, it's an all-fired mean deal, I'll 'low, Jess," went on Brant, "but bein' as how it's a long walk ter ther valley, an' I'm a leetle lame, I reckon I'll take ther oath

an' be one of yer if yer'll let me. I kin handle a shootin' iron with any of yer! If yer don't believe it, try me!"

"Ha! ha! A good bluff, but it don't go! I'm not hankerin' to play target just this minute!" said Jesse James, with a keen look. "I reckon now you'd do wonders with a pop if you had one, wouldn't you?"

Brant did not relish the keen look bent upon him, but he replied as indifferently as ever:

"Bein' a miner myself, I ain't no friend o' ther man thet's layin' fer ther boys' pay," he said, honestly, "but yer've got ther bulge on me, Jess, an', besides, I'm in want o' money! Thar's a game on at ther valley ter-morrer night thet I wouldn't miss fer a million!"

"Whereabouts?"

Jesse James asked the question with a show of interest.

"At Slippery Hank's, the nigger's. Thar's a chap thar from Pasadena thet's got barrels of ther stuff, an' every man in ther valley is lookin' fer him."

The eyes of the outlaw snapped, for he was an inveterate gambler, and one of his reasons for coming to the valley was to meet the man from Pasadena, who was another outlaw of the lowest order.

"Then you'll take the oath?" he asked, a trifle incredulously.

To save himself, Frank Brant could not help glancing at his companion, but it was so dark where they stood that he could not catch his expression.

"I'll take it if Jim hyar will," he said, slowly.

"An' I won't do it! Cussed ef I will!" blurted out Phil Tyler, the second detective, impulsively. "I won't take no oath ter help yer rascally gang! Yer kin blow me ter blazes fust! I'm willin' ter die honest!"

If a bomb had exploded under their feet the group of outlaws could not have been more astonished, while, as for Brant, he held his breath through sheer concern over his partner's rashness.

"That's a serious decision, stranger," said Jesse James, solemnly. "It means that you'll squeal on the gang the first chance you get, and in this gang there's only one kind of medicine for squealers."

"You mean to shoot me?"

"Like a dog, stranger. Dead men tell no tales!"

If Brant could have gotten a minute's conversation with his companion he would have tried to influence his decision, but a word would only tell the tale of their

identity, and two lives instead of one would pay the penalty.

"Put him back against the tree, boys. It's time we were going!" ordered Jesse James, sharply.

Brant closed his eyes and turned his back, while Mrs. Star came forward from the stage and dropped on her knees before the outlaw.

"My God! You must not commit a murder!" she whispered, shrilly.

The only answer was a sonorous "one" in the outlaw's voice, followed promptly by the click and crack of a revolver.

Frank James raised his weapon and fired the next shot, after which the other three outlaws put a bullet into the prostrate body.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE OUTLAWS SURPRISED.

When it was all over, Frank James picked the young wife up bodily and swung her into the saddle of one of the other horses, forcing Prairie Pete to mount one of the unsaddled leaders.

"Come!" said Jesse James, tapping Brant on the shoulder. "We'll move on a bit before we administer the oath. Bring that body, boys. I want a closer look at it, and, besides, it will be a fitting subject for this chap to swear over!"

Brant moved ahead, with the blood almost bursting his veins, and Mrs. Star's weeping nearly driving him to madness.

Phil Tyler was dead, and by his own folly, in refusing to take an oath which he would be thoroughly justified in breaking, and if they ever examined his body the game would be up, for both detectives were traveling in disguises, and, besides, they carried upon their persons detective's badges and telltale papers.

How to prevent this inspection was occupying Brant's mind, so the short walk among the rocks was ended before he knew it.

The men who had carried the body placed it upon a rock, where the moonlight fell full upon it, and then Brant was ordered to kneel and kiss the dead man's forehead.

He glanced around at the burly figures of the outlaws,

and then up at the white masks that covered their faces, and, remembering his friend's fate, advanced a few paces.

A shrill cry from Mrs. Star stopped him.

Frank James clapped his hand over her mouth and turned her head so she could not see the tragedy, but he managed at the same time to raise and level his revolver.

Jesse James and his men were standing beside their horses at a pace from the body, and each held a weapon, cocked and turned full upon the man whom they were initiating.

Brant reached the body and bent over it quickly, and as he did so something that felt like a thunderbolt struck him squarely on the head and he felt himself pitching forward into inky darkness.

A roar of laughter from the group brought him to his senses a minute later, but in that short time he had been bound hand and foot and laid upon another flat rock, and the outlaw gang was busy at their work of rifling his dead comrade's pockets.

Brant opened his eyes long enough to see his friend's private papers in one of the outlaw's hands, then closed them with a groan, and tried to feign unconsciousness.

"It's all up with me," he thought, but there was not a tremor of fear for himself, for just as he closed his eyes he had caught a glimpse of Mrs. Star sitting in a heap beside him.

He tried to think of some way of saving her.

The thought came to him like a flash, and set his brain to working.

Jesse James held the papers in the fading moonlight and tried to read them, while his men crowded around him, almost forgetting the woman in their excitement.

"He's from Pinkerton's, and they're on to our lay, boys," explained the outlaw finally. "This fellow's name is Tyler, and it's his first trip after big game. Guess I'll have to give the other one a double dose to make up for my hurry! Hello! Where's the gal! She's broke for the bushes!"

There was a general movement toward Brant, who was still lying motionless upon the rock, and then the outlaws began searching for the girl behind the neighboring boulders.

Jesse James put the horses in a group and stood by their heads.

Just then a startled shriek came from the young girl's

lips, and Prairie Pete gave a howl of satisfaction as he bent and jerked her violently from a clump of bushes.

Brant ground his teeth as another cry followed, then he listened, for a chorus of shouts only a little distance up the hill answered.

"Help! Help! They are murdering me!" yelled Mrs. Star, as Prairie Pete's heavy hand nearly choked the breath from her body.

Jesse James did not wait for anything, but sprang into a saddle, and, as a great clattering of hoofbeats came around the rocks, he took a flying shot at Brant, and then bounded off into the darkness on the finest horse in the West.

The rest of his men attempted to follow, but they were a second too late.

Crack! went a rifle, and a bullet sped by Prairie Pete's ear. The next second Jonas Green, one of the other highwaymen, reeled and fell from his saddle, with his horse on top of him.

"After 'em, sheriff! It's ther 'white mask gang!'" yelled an excited voice. "They held up their stage an' run off with ther gal! Whoop! Look out thar, yer sinner! Take thet fer yer impudence!"

The last was accompanied by a report that awoke the echoes, but Frank James, whose heart had been the target, burst into a roar of laughter, and, sending two bullets in return for one, disappeared between the boulders.

A volley of shots followed, with serious results for the outlaws. Two of them were killed instantly, while the third was disabled.

Then Sheriff Waller, of Arizona, rounded up his men, finding that only one out of seven had been injured.

"Took 'em unawares, I reckon," he chuckled, going over to Brant. "An' jest in time, too! Great snakes! This hyar looks as tho' ther robbers was er contemplan' murder!"

Mrs. Star had fainted, so she could not explain, but Brant promptly found his tongue and told the whole story.

A minute later he was on his feet, showing them a scratch on his arm, where the outlaw's bullet had grazed it, and struck the metal badge in his vest pocket, saving his life for him.

Pete Cole, the regular driver of the stage, surveyed the wound critically, and then burst forth into a torrent of invectives.

"Jess didn't expect you, sheriff," said Brant, who was chafing Mrs. Star's hands. "And I'll swear I thought I was a goner for fair!"

"I'm arter the white mask gang, an' Jesse James is the cap'n of it," said the sheriff, doggedly. "Ther varmints hev been robbin' and plunderin' hereabouts fer er month, an' ef thar's er man in Arizona thet kin ketch ther rascals, I reckon I'm ther man! Yer know thar's er reward for Jess, stranger?"

"Of course I know it! The government has offered ten thousand dollars for him, dead or alive!" responded Brant. "So I'm as anxious to catch him as you are, sheriff!"

The sheriff moved so as to bring himself directly in front of the detective, and then Brant noticed, with some concern, that the other members of the posse were surrounding him.

Mrs. Star had entirely revived and was sitting on the ground, watching the movements of the men curiously.

The sheriff cleared his throat, and then his hand dropped to the butt of his revolver as he eyed Brant sternly.

"Bein' as I'm sheriff hyar, I reckon thet thar reward belongs to me, stranger," he said, gruffly. "Er detective is all right in his place, but they ain't wanted in Arizona. The sheriff kin regerlate things, I reckon, without any of their help, leastwise he means ter try—do yer ketch on, stranger?"

"You mean that you want me to quit the game?" said Brant, quickly.

"Thet thar's jest what I want, stranger! Glad yer understand it so easy! I'll say right hyar 'twon't be best fer yer ter be seen hereabouts ag'in. Thar's men in this hyar section thet hez er nat'ral hankerin' fer detectives, an' when they see 'em they git er crook in ther finger! Thar's yer hoss, now git! Yer know ther bound'ry lines, I reckon!"

CHAPTER XXXVII.

IN PERILOUS QUARTERS.

Frank Brant was an old detective, and accustomed to emergencies, but to be kicked out, metaphorically speaking, by the sheriff of a barren Arizona county, was a new experience.

In a second it flashed into his mind that this was one of

the many rascally officials who held positions in the West for no other reason than to weed out trespassing thieves in order to secure all the plunder themselves.

If this was the case, his position was hopeless, for a sheriff of that kind could always find an excuse for pulling a trigger, and, besides, there was not a member of his posse but what would corroborate his story.

Brant saw the dilemma he was in instantly, but he still hesitated about mounting.

Brant gave Mrs. Star a quick look, which she was clever enough to understand.

Then, as the sheriff was urging him to hurry, he sprang into the saddle and rode away just as the moon dropped below the horizon and left the rocky wilderness in darkness.

Twenty-four hours later a young man alighted from a Mexican mustang before an inn at Lordsburg, and, after handing the horse over to a stable boy, he sauntered into the place and ordered refreshments.

An arrival at that hour was a little unusual, but the proprietor of the inn, "Stumpy Jack," so called because of one wooden leg, received him as though his appearance had been looked for.

There was no one else in the place, so the stranger, who was Frank Brant, without any disguise, dropped easily into a chair and began the conversation.

"The worst country I ever struck! I've been lost three times between Clifton and Lordsburg! Give me a bracer, boss, and a bite to eat, and see that my horse gets a rub. He'll be stiff to-morrow if he doesn't."

"What's yer business hyar, stranger?" asked the proprietor, as he poured the drink.

"Prospecting! I was in the Shaeffelin mines last year, and I got the fever! Reckon the chances are better below here than where I come from."

The landlord set the drink on the table and gave his guest a keen look, then he asked a question:

"Reckon, now, yer a tenderfoot, ain't ye?"

"Do I look like one?" asked Brant, promptly, straightening up his slight figure.

The landlord chuckled and sized his man up carefully with a comprehensive glance.

"Yer losin' yer way looks like it, stranger," he said, dryly. "Thar's er stage line frum Clifton ter Lordsburg. All yer hed ter do was ter foller it!"

"Take me for a fool!" retorted Brant, quickly. "If

there's a stage line, where's the stage? I understand it was due here at sundown."

Stumpy Jack scratched his head and cut a slice of bacon before he answered; then, when he came to the table again, his eyes looked craftier than ever.

"Thar's a young feller stayin' hyar thet's interested in thet thar question, stranger," he began. "Hyar he comes this minute! He's too oneasy ter sleep, I reckon!"

The door of the eating-room opened, and a young man entered, and for just a second the two stared at each other.

"Just in time, stranger! I always did hate to eat alone!" said Brant, recovering himself after a minute. "Double up on that order, landlord, and then stir up the fire. I'm stiff with the cold, in spite of your liquor!"

Once more the two young men glanced at each other, and then, as the landlord's back was turned for a minute, a signal was exchanged between them.

"Speaking about the stage from Clifton," went on Brant, deliberately, "I heard an hour ago that the sheriff had overhauled it! How's that for a yarn! They say he corraled the strong box just like any highwayman, and got away with the dust. That don't leave much for the white mask gang, if they're still in this section!"

"How do yer know they be?" asked the landlord, setting a bottle on the table.

Brant shrugged his shoulders and started on his bread and bacon.

"That's what they told me at the mines before I left," he said, indifferently. "They said the Wilcox gang was having more than it could do, so Jesse James had taken it upon himself to visit Arizona."

"Do you reckon thet ther white masks and ther James gang air one and ther same?" asked Stumpy Jack, breathlessly.

Brant gave him a quick look and went on with his repast, thereby giving his companion a chance to answer.

"Of course, they're one and the same, Stumpy!"

"Yer two know er lot fer tenderfeet," began the landlord, moving away just as a rumble of wheels was heard outside. The three darted to the window and then to the door, and were just in time to see the old stagecoach roll into the yard, preceded by an outrider.

"Hello, Stumpy! Hyar we are! A little late, but better late than never!" bawled Pete Cole, the outrider. "We was held up by ther white masks, an' rescued by

ther sheriff! Hurrah fer Wallie! He's the gamest cock in Arizona!"

"Hurrah!" echoed Stumpy Jack, as he stumped out to meet the coach, with an evident desire to get a word with the sheriff!

"Thank God, you're safe, Star!" muttered Brant to his companion; then, as rapidly as possible, he related the story of his adventure, including the villainous oath which had bound his wife to silence.

The next minute Mrs. Star tumbled out of the coach into her husband's arms, and the sheriff and his men, who had not recognized Brant, repaired to the barroom to drink and talk things over.

Brant saw the young couple start off to the sleeping rooms overhead, and then went back to finish his supper in a room separated from the barroom by a thin wooden partition.

Nobody noticed him, apparently, for they were all parched with thirst, but after a short time a number of low remarks were ejaculated in his direction.

As he strained his ears to catch these, the outer door opened softly and a burly giant, wearing a white mask, slipped in and closed the door softly behind him.

Brant made a motion to rise, but the click of a trigger stopped him, and he found himself looking down the barrel of a businesslike Derringer.

"Let out so much as a peep and I'll blow you to blazes!" whispered the fellow, hoarsely. "I want to hear what those rascals are saying! You can go on with your grub, if you're still about it!"

Brant cursed his luck inwardly, but there was nothing to be done, and after a second he began to enjoy his novel position.

The men in the barroom were warming up under the influence of good liquor, and it was evident that their host had told them there was nothing to fear from the direction of the eating-room, inasmuch as his guest was only a tenderfoot prospector from the neighboring diggings.

"I reckon Jess and me, betwixt us, hev routed ther last of them thar Pinkerton men," came through the partition in the sheriff's voice. "He sent one on 'em ter kingdom come, an' I sent ther tother ter ther bound'ry! I 'low ther way is clear fer a fa'r an' sqar' fight, an' ef ther sheriff ain't in at ther death, you kin hev my boots, pardners!"

"Ther may be more of ther sleuthhounds, Wallie," said one of the imbibers. "Yer can't never count ther last o' them fellers! When one is dead, thar's a dozen ter ther funeral, but I 'low thet ther feller with ther whiskers was skeered fer fair! He never looked behind him, not even at ther woman!"

"He's er goin' yet, yer kin bet on it," chuckled the sheriff. "Now, ef we kin jest find out what ther railroad folks has done with thet thar boodle! Jess is er layin' fer it, as sure as shootin', an' our game is ter wait till he has got it!"

At this remark the white mask over the face of the outlaw hiding in Brant's room twitched a little, and Brant had no difficulty in guessing that the fellow was laughing.

"Set 'em up, boys! It's on me!" came once more in the landlord's voice, then the sound of a wooden leg stumping across the floor made the listening outlaw back slowly to the door, without, however, changing the aim of his weapon.

Brant stared at him curiously, taking pains to keep his hands above the table, and the next second the two doors opened and closed simultaneously.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE CHALLENGE.

"Ther sheriff would like ter scrape yer acquaintance, stranger," said Stumpy, who had entered, half drunk, "an' as he ain't ther kind ter take no fer an answer, yer'd better jine us! Thar's as good lickin' out yonder as thar is in hyar, an' tain't ther rule of ther house ter drink alone," he added.

Brant rose good-naturedly and sauntered out into the barroom, and just as he entered through one door his friend, Will Star, came in at another.

They nodded to each other indifferently, and then joined the group at the bar, who were growing momentarily drunker and drunker.

"They won't be one, two, three in the game," thought Brant, as he glanced around, then his eye happened to fall on the face of the sheriff.

This official was as sober as it was necessary for a man in his important position to be, and although his face was as red as blood, his eyes were as shrewd and clear as ever.

"He'll be a fair match for Jess in cunning, but not at the trigger," thought the detective, as he noticed his clumsy fingers. "I'll let them fight it out, for I know Jess will win, after which Star and I will get a show to corral the ten thousand."

Then he ordered drinks for the crowd with the swaggering air of a typical tenderfoot, and began bragging of his prowess, meanwhile watching the effect of his efforts upon the drinkers.

"Reckon, now, yer a cracker-jack at ther trigger! Yer look it! Haw! haw!" chuckled one of the men, good-naturedly. "Ever shoot er coyote or a jack-rabbit, stranger?" asked another, with a wink at the sheriff. "Better corral him, Waller! He'd be an ornymment ter ther force!"

"I'll show you whether I'm a tenderfoot or not!" snapped Brant, making a great show of indignation. "Stand up against the door, yonder, and see me cut a lock of your hair. Ha! ha! You dare not do it! You're a coward and a liar!"

The words came so suddenly that the men stared at each other. They had not dreamt for a moment that the slight, puny chap was really so nervy.

"Thar's a dare fer yer, Miggins! Yer'll hev ter take it!" howled the sheriff. "Now, then, gentlemen, fair play! Stand up ag'in ther door, Wiggins! Ef ther chap kin cut your hair you're got er chance at his'n, an' I 'low yer jest ther man ter improve yer oppertunities."

Brant saw a glance exchanged between them, and Wiggins braced up instantly. At the same minute Star leaned across the bar and breathed a low whisper:

"It's a trick, but you've got to do it, old man! I'll keep my eye on the sheriff, and I can shoot through my coat pocket, if I have to! I'd put a bullet through the rascal's heart and be done with him, if I was in your place."

Wiggins was already standing with his back against a door, and Brant drew his revolver calmly and pointed it at him.

Every eye was bent upon his face, for the first second, then the entire group, with the exception of Star, turned their gaze upon Wiggins, the detective never taking his glance from the face of the sheriff.

"One, two, three! Fire!"

Stumpy Jack did the counting, and at the last word Brant let the hammer fall, but instead of firing at the man's scalp, he lowered the weapon.

Simultaneously with the report, the door leading to the eating-room opened and three men, wearing white masks, appeared upon the threshold.

"Hands up, sheriff! Hands up, all around!" roared the voice of Jesse James. "Much obliged, young man, for giving us one less to cover! Now, then, gentlemen, stand as you are until we relieve you of your weapons!"

There was a breathless silence for a second, while every man in the room put his hands above his head; then Sheriff Waller delivered himself of a few invectives.

"By ——! It's Jess himself!"

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE OUTLAW'S TRICK.

The detective's laugh was cut short by a curse; then, by some trick unknown to the others, Stumpy Jack put out every light in the barroom, leaving the contestants in total darkness. "Fire! Pepper 'em, boys!" roared Jesse James, pulling the trigger of his weapon.

Crack, crack, went the pistols, and a wild scramble followed, as every man in the room made a rush to get behind the bar and tables. Kicks, cuffs, curses and shots at short range got badly mixed up, but both Star and Brant managed to avoid serious damage, and each secured a fairly safe position within the first few seconds.

"It's the white mask gang! Bolt for it, sheriff!" yelled a frightened voice, and one of the posse leaped to the center door and succeeded in opening it.

Flash!

Bang!

A bullet struck him squarely in the forehead, felling him like an ox, then Jesse James leaped across the floor and fired two more shots in quick succession.

There was a moment of silence after that, in which the shooters were trying to locate their enemies, and then some one opened the door and stood on the threshold outlined against the sky, which was gray with the first light of morning.

"By Jove! It's a woman!" muttered Star, who had found Brant close by his side; then, at the risk of his life, he raised his head from behind the barrel which had given him protection.

"Father!"

The word was spoken in a startled voice, and for a second no one answered.

Jesse James had disappeared behind something, so there was no one left to shoot at, and every man in the room had taken the precaution to even stifle his breathing.

"Father! Where are you? What has happened?" Then, believing that her parent had been killed, the young girl uttered a shriek of terror.

Darting into the room, she made her way to the bar, where a candle was standing unlighted, but before she could find a match the door was closed behind her.

"Stumpy is all right, miss! He's skulking behind the bar," said Jesse James, taking pains as he spoke to change his location.

Two revolvers cracked instantly, and another shriek from the girl followed. Then, believing that she was in dangerous premises, she dashed back across the room and out of the door, slamming it behind her.

Another period of silence followed, and the suspense was becoming unbearable, when something began to move in the darkest corner of the barroom.

"It's the beer barrel! Aim low!" whispered Star to Brant. "The thing is empty, and the rascal is inside of it!"

Two shots followed, both aimed low, and the barrel fell with a thud.

During the confusion that followed, Jesse James slipped to the door and was out like a flash of lightning. Brant darted after him, followed by Star.

A clatter of hoofs in the darkness showed that some one was departing.

It was too dark for the detectives to see, but the sound of more than one horse's hoofs led them to believe that the whole gang was slipping away.

They dashed in the direction from which the sounds came, but they were too late. The others had sneaked out before Jesse did, and they were now speeding down the road on the sheriff's best horses.

"Come!" said Star, turning back. "There's an outside staircase! We'll get Madge, and Lila can come, too. She's a beauty, pard. Then we'll give the sheriff the slip and get after Jess!"

Star darted around the corner of the house and up a pair of rickety stairs as he spoke, and returned in a minute with the two young women.

Silently they stole to the stable. The sheriff and his posse were still inside, awaiting another attack from the

white mask gang. They had heard the departing hoof-beats, but they suspected a trap.

"There are four horses left," said Brant, after looking over the stable. "Three of 'em are badly fagged, but the fourth is a dandy!"

"That's Pepperpot! He's my broncho!" cried the inn-keeper's daughter, as she dragged out a saddle. As there were no signs of interruption, the two detectives hastily saddled the other horses and then, moving with great care, the four stole out of the stables.

"I reckon it's dead wrong ter leave pa this way," began Lila, with a glance over her shoulder, "but no one would blame me if they knew the truth. My dad is in with ther wust robber in Arizona."

"You mean the sheriff?"

"Yes. Pa's his right-hand man! Thar ain't no tellin' what day he'll git found out an' chased ter Yuma!"

"Then you have every right in the world to leave him! A man like that doesn't deserve a daughter! You stick to us and we'll take care of you!" exclaimed Brant, admiringly.

The young girl blushed and touched up her pony and in another minute the inn, with its half-drunken occupants, was left behind them. There was only a half a dozen pedestrians on the main street of Lordsburg, but as they all knew Lila, they inquired eagerly about the stagecoach.

"It was held up by the white mask gang and rescued by the sheriff," was the girl's prompt answer. "This hyar lady an' gent was in her an' thar warn't no one injured. Ther robbers got erway with ther strong box an' er couple o' hundred!"

The news was so mild for that section that the answer was quite satisfactory, and Lordsburg, even when it did thoroughly awaken, took no action in the matter.

The plan to capture the miners' salaries was known only to the white mask gang, the two detectives and the sheriff and his men, and not one of this number dreamed of communicating the secret.

"We have the inside track at present," Brant said, as they left the main road and branched off to the westward. "The sheriff is waiting to overhaul Jess after he has corraled the dust, and our lay is to nab him before he gets it. We may be able to save a good many lives by thwarting his villainous plans."

Lila took the lead after that, and it was not long before

they reached a narrow trail that wound among the hills, shortening the ride to Dead Valley considerably.

A roadhouse ten miles from Lordsburg furnished them with breakfast, and, as they were eating, Brant inveigled the owner of the ranch into imparting some intelligence.

He had been visited by three men at daybreak whose appearance was suspicious, and, moreover, he had been able to recognize two of Stumpy Jack's mustangs in the outfit. The detectives exchanged glances, but did not comment on the matter. Jesse James had so many friends scattered about in that vicinity that they were suspicious of every one, and those who were not friends of the outlaw were likely to be friends of the sheriff.

What they did know was that Jess and his men were ahead of them, so after looking well to the weapons of all four of the party they started out once more on the track of the robbers.

CHAPTER XL.

A LONELY HOLDUP.

"Halt! Back away there, Brant! Jess and his men are just ahead!" called Star, softly, as he turned from the crest of a knoll which he had just gained and made a dash back down the grade toward his companions. A hurried consultation followed, and then, after dismounting, Star crept through the bushes to the brow of the hill.

Three horsemen could be seen distinctly in the ravine below. They were half hidden by rocks on one side, but in plain view on the other.

"They're waiting for some one," reported Star, a minute later.

"There's a meeting of mine owners in Lordsburg to-day!" whispered Lila. "Mr. Humphrey, of ther Royal Copper mine, will most likely come thet way! They all left their horses as they talked and crept to the brow of the hill waiting until they saw a movement among the robbers.

Suddenly a man that they knew to be Jesse James reined his horse into the middle of the trail and raising a revolver aimed it squarely at the point of rock around which the mine owner would be forced to approach.

"Mount and be ready! We must help the victim, whoever it is!" cried Star, in a low voice. No sooner were

the words out of his mouth than he heard the voice of Jesse James:

"Halt! Throw up your hands! Another step and you are a dead man!"

The next instant he caught the sound of hoofbeats behind him.

Without turning his head to see what was coming, Jesse James went on with his bold deed, advancing promptly to the side of the horseman who had obeyed his order with alacrity and helped himself to his weapons. Both Brant and Star raised their revolvers and then their bullets whistled through the air as a warning to the robbers.

Crack!

Crack!

The outlaw's two companions had wheeled in their saddles and returned the fire, and at the first shot Star's horse dropped dead to the ground.

This threw Star into a ditch by the side of the trail and in less than a second his wife was beside him. Brant emptied his weapon at the two men and had just knocked one of them from the saddle when a stinging pain in his arm made him drop his pistol.

Crack went a bulldog in Lila's hand, and the second outlaw gave a howl of pain, then both he and Jesse James put spurs to their horses and dashed out of sight around the boulder, leaving their victims sitting in the middle of the trail trying to understand what had happened.

"That's the hottest work I ever saw, and I've seen a good deal," the stranger finally stammered, as his wits came back to him. Then he slipped off his horse and went to Brant's assistance.

Star picked himself up and limped to where his chum sat in his saddle trying to improvise a tourniquet out of a cedar stick and an old bandana, and five minutes passed before either one of them thought to notice the prostrate outlaw. When Star finally bent over him he recognized Prairie Pete and saw that the fellow was bleeding terribly. He had lapsed into a condition so closely resembling death that the detective supposed he had slipped the coil of life completely.

"He didn't get much! Only a hundred or so," Mr. Humphreys remarked, after he examined his pockets. "I was a fool to come alone, but I thought I had all those fellows located. Elkins is in jail and Wilcox in Colorado, and the news of the white maskers has only just got to the valley."

"They'll hear more of them before morning," growled Star, as he remounted his horse. "And it's my advice to you, sir, to go back to Dead Valley. There's a scheme on foot to rob the miners of their money."

"How do you know?" asked Humphreys, wheeling his horse instantly.

Star drew a badge from his pocket and handed it to the gentleman, and a significant glance was exchanged between them.

Star then gave him his own pistol, reserving the one that he had taken from Prairie Pete, and then, as Mrs. Star and Lila had succeeded in bandaging Brant's arm, the little party moved on together.

"Keep your eyes open!" warned Star, as they picked their way among rocks and clumps of chaparral large enough to hide a dozen highwaymen.

A shot and a bullet whistling by his ear followed promptly on the warning, then a shout of laughter directly behind them made them all turn in their saddles.

They had just descended a steep grade, with rocks piled high upon either side, and there on the very top of the ascent was Jesse James and a companion whose figure was so like the outlaw's that it could easily be recognized as that of Frank James, his brother.

"Tricked, by thunder!" exclaimed Star, as he seized his wife's horse by the bridle and swung it around behind him. "Where did we pass him?"

The scoundrel has the advantage! He is tracking us!" groaned Brant. We must play his own game and hide somewhere in the boulders."

"They must be saving their bullets," said Mr. Humphreys, as no further shots were heard.

"Hanged if I don't think they're going the other way," broke out Star, as Jesse James suddenly rose in his saddle and seemed to be pointing out a path of some sort to his brother.

Suddenly something flashed upon the sky that made the detectives open their eyes, and a second later they saw a play of colors dart from the very person of the bold outlaw. "A signal! The fellow is flashing a pocket mirror and making signs in the sky! That means that he has friends about here," said Star, quickly.

Without a word more the horses heads were turned and in a second the outlaws were left out of sight. Star and Brant, however, took turns in riding backward, but

Dead Valley was reached without a glimpse of the two toobers.

No name was ever better suited to a place than was "Dead Valley" to the strip of land between these Arizona foothills, for it was as quiet as a grave by day and the valley of death after nightfall. Copper mines of no great wealth filled the surrounding hills, while the one street in the valley was lined on either side by the cabins or "shacks" of the miners.

Every other shack displayed a whiskey sign. Every third one was decorated by a picture of the ace of spades or a bunch of dice arranged temptingly upon a table. Drunkenness and vice ran rampant at night, and, as every official of the valley was either a drunkard or a gambler, there was no marked improvement in the condition of things by daylight.

The noon shift of men was taking place as the detectives arrived, but as Mr. Humphreys, one of the mine owners who gambled in a fair game, but did nothing worse, was with them, they attracted no attention, the miners taking them for bookkeepers or tenderfoot relations and directed all their glances toward the two female aces.

"A tough lot," muttered Star, as he glanced them over.

As they rode along the mine owner pointed with a gesture to his own cabin, and five minutes later they were residents of Dead Valley, with a plausible story to tell the old inhabitants in case they exhibited undue curiosity.

CHAPTER XLI.

JESSE JAMES IN DEAD VALLEY.

Twenty-four hours passed and yet not a sign of Jesse James or any of his gang was seen in Dead Valley. The express train stopped at the station, twenty miles away, and two of the teams came back to the settlement, but the miners still wore glum faces, for there were no tidings of any money. Meanwhile "Black Bart," the man from Pasadena, lingered in the valley, dropping in at each gambling house in turn and cursing the bad luck that made stakes so difficult to find in that vicinity.

The two detectives, who had established their identity as Mr. Humphrey's nephews, managed to make Black Bart's acquaintance over a game of seven up, and the second day of their stay they succeeded in getting him, as they supposed, much the worse for Dead Valley liquor.

During the play that night the stranger suddenly rose from his seat, exclaiming:

"Hello! What's up?"

A yell from the street was taken up that minute, and from one voice there seemed to suddenly develop a baker's dozen.

"There's an ox team missin'!" yelled some one who had caught the import of the cry. "Buck Edwards ain't showed up, an' not one of his men! As like as not he had the dust! He was cartin' a load of codfish!"

The gambling den was emptied in a minute, the stranger leaving last.

When Brant reached the street he looked around in amazement. Nine-tenths of the population of Dead Valley was in the depths of the various mines, but the other tenth was in the main street of the settlement, standing in groups, like batches of criminals, each with two mounted men wearing white masks, keeping guard over them. In a second he understood the situation.

Jesse James and his gang had taken possession of Dead Valley after robbing every man of his last month's salary.

The clatter of horses' hoofs just around a bend in the road reached them at that instant, and, yelling like a band of Indians, a group of some twenty horsemen came pouring into the valley.

"It's the sheriff!" muttered Brant. "Get out of range, Star! There's going to be a circus!"

There was a low hedge of chaparral running along the main street of Dead Valley, and the two detectives vaulted over it instantly and ran pell-mell for the shelter of one of the cabins.

They both narrowly escaped a bullet from the sheriff's posse and were glad to hear the guard's weapon crack, for it showed them that an opportunity was likely to be given them to hunt up shooting irons.

If a cyclone had burst upon the settlement the commotion could not have been greater, but as every native had been disarmed by the members of the white mask gang, the contest was solely between these ruffians and the sheriff's posse. Star dashed into an empty cabin, finding one "sawed off shotgun" and a rusty Derringer.

They were both loaded, so he passed one to Brant, then keeping in the shadows between the hills and the cabins, they made a detour, entering the main thoroughfare again at the other end of the valley.

What had happened they could not tell, for it was too

dark to see much, but for fully fifteen minutes there was constant firing. Sometimes a yell from the sheriff's men made them think that the rascally county official was victorious, and then a shout in the unmistakable voice of Jesse James showed that both sides were on deck and fighting valiantly.

"Lie low, old man! It'll be our turn next," warned Star, as he turned into a narrow space between two shacks.

Brant squeezed in beside him, and just in time, for a shower of promiscuous bullets whizzed past at that minute.

"Whoop! There they go! Three of the sheriff's men after three White Masks! If they'll only pair off that way we'll stand some show yet!" muttered Brant, as a group of horsemen flew by.

Crack!

Crack!

Two more pistols spoke merrily, and the detectives crouched low and strained their necks, and the next second the sheriff himself galloped past sitting sideways in his saddle and emptying his revolver at a man in a white mask, who was pursuing him.

"That was Frank James!" whispered Star; "he sits a horse exactly like his brother! By Jove! That was a good shot! The sheriff is down! Whoop! Now's our time, old man! Put a bullet into the fellow!"

He raised the shotgun as he spoke and pulled the hammer, but Frank James flattened himself on his horse's back like a postage stamp, and, without turning his head, dashed down the street, his horse making an easy leap over the sheriff's horse, which had fallen.

Star dashed after him, but he disappeared behind a cabin, then fearing to pass the spot, he turned and came back.

The sheriff had picked himself up and was examining his weapon, and Star yelled at him in a voice that was well suited to the occasion.

"Drop that, you thief! Up with your hands! Move a muscle and I'll blow a window in you! I reckon you fellows think you own this hyar valley!"

"I guess yer don't know who yer talkin' to," retorted the sheriff, as he put his hands up obediently. "I'm Sheriff Waller, an' I'm hyar in my official kupassity!"

Star made no reply, but whipping a lariat from his pocket, he lipped it over the old fellow's head, at the same

time ordering him to lower his arms so that he could bind them tightly to his body.

Then, using both hands, he made the job a thorough one, and throwing the helpless man into a shack nearby he closed the door and carefully disposed of the latch string so that no one would open it.

The sound of a hoofbeat coming slowly up the street made him quicken his pace, and a moment later he was behind the angle of a shack waiting with his finger on the trigger of the old "sawed-off" for Frank James to pass him.

It was a long wait, for the clever outlaw evidently guessed his intentions and meanwhile the firing and shouting further up the street had ceased altogether.

After ten minutes, that seemed like an eternity, Star heard the outlaw turn and ride cautiously away, so he ventured to leave his hiding-place and go toward the scene of action.

As he hurried along he noticed a dead body lying in the road, and after that these obstacles became frequent, and he was able to count outlaws, miners and sheriff's men in about equal numbers.

He was almost up to the main saloon of the settlement before he heard a living being, and then the sound came in the shape of a whistle.

Cautiously he picked his way in the direction of the whistle.

Brant was hiding in the rear of Slippery Hank's place and his first motion was to signal his chum to silence.

"Jess has won, hands down," he whispered, softly. "His gang has murdered the sheriff's posse to a man, and they've driven the miners to cover in the buildings yonder! Jess is in here! He's as cool as though nothing had happened!"

He motioned for Star to put his eye to a rust hole in the heavy iron window shutters as he spoke, and the detective did so, moving with the utmost caution.

What he saw was a spectacle that few men have witnessed.

Jesse James, the most notorious outlaw which the world ever produced was seated at a table playing cards with "Black Bart," a man who was reputed to have robbed stagecoaches of thousands without once pulling a trigger, and around them, upon the floor, were seven dead bodies, one the proprietor of the place in which they were sitting.

Two men, both wearing white masks, were stationed at the door, but there was not a sound in the room except what was made in dealing the pack of greasy cards and shifting the bags of gold dust and crisp bills from one side of the table to the other.

The two detectives drew back from the window after a minute.

"I suppose he thinks we are miles away, but we'll fool him," muttered Star, feeling the barrel of his weapon.

"How many men are left on the outside, anyhow?"

"Four. There may be one or two more patrolling the street. They've given orders for the natives to keep inside under penalty of death, and I reckon they've confiscated the most of the weapons. If I knew where Frank James was I'd feel a little easier!"

"Sh! There he is! Down, old man! Don't let the fellow see you!" whispered Star before he finished.

The two dropped softly upon the ground, and the outlaw rode on until he was directly abreast of them, when Brant raised his weapon.

A sound inside of the gambling den kept him from firing, and a second later the shutter was flung open.

"It's Frank! Shall I hail him, Jess?" asked a man who was peering out.

The detectives did not hear the answer, but the shutter was closed instantly, and by that time Frank James was out of reach of Brant's weapon.

Creeping over to the building, Star put his eye again to the hole in the shutter, and found that the game had been changed; the two bandits were playing poker.

"Jess is winning," he reported; then the detectives stole around the house and out into the main street until they caught another glimpse of Frank James talking with his men in front of the grocery store, where twenty natives were imprisoned.

Slipping into the bushes, they waited until the confab was over, and by the time Frank was ready to ride back on his beat the detectives had hatched a scheme which they hoped would be successful.

The midnight shift of workmen was near at hand, and by watching their chance they gained the path leading back over the hills to the main shaft of the mine in order to tell them what had happened as soon as the first man's head appeared above the surface.

What was their surprise on reaching the shaft to find half a dozen white masks before them!

The wearers were stationed within a hundred yards of the shaft, and another could be outlined against the ore sheds which covered the day's mining.

"Jess holds the winning hand," muttered Star. "With twenty-five men he is holding up three hundred!"

"They seem to be holding 'em down," observed Brant, as the fellow nearest the mouth of the shaft suddenly ripped out an order.

"Git back thar, —— ye! Another step an' down ye go with er bullet in yer carcass! I tell ye ye can't come up jest yet, an' thet thar's all thar is erbout it!"

The report of a revolver sounded a second later, which looked as though the imprisoned miner had ventured up another rung of the ladder.

They dashed back down the hill, and after dodging among the shacks, finally gained the main thoroughfare.

"Hello! The miners have broken out!" cried Star, as two quick shots back by the mine were echoed by a roar of voices; "Frank is giving the alarm! See, there they go, the devils!"

He pointed to a group of horsemen who were galloping down the road, and then the two leaped the fence in front of Slippery Hank's and stood before the place—staring.

"Gone, by thunder!" snapped Star, as he saw that the door was standing open.

Brant rushed inside, stepping carefully over the bodies, but there was no one in sight, so he backed out promptly.

They easily found two horses that had belonged to some of the sheriff's men, and they mounted these as the miners rushed back to the settlement.

After that bedlam reigned for at least an hour, and then the natives of Dead Valley regained their senses.

The sheriff was dragged out of the shack.

An angry crowd of miners surged around him, and it was evident they intended to lynch him.

"String him up!" "Lynch him!" cried the crowd.

"Give the sheriff ther rope fer kickin' up such er disturbance!"

Star jumped when he heard the last speaker's voice, but as the crowd had thickened around the sheriff and he was completely hemmed in, he had no opportunity to inspect him closely.

"If that wasn't Jess I'll eat my hat," he muttered in Brant's ear just as the lariat dropped over the sheriff's

head, and a dozen of the excited miners started jerking him toward one of the cabins.

"Too bad thar ain't no tree, but thier shack'll do! Slip it around ther beam an' look ter ther knot, pardners," said the familiar voice on the edge of the crowd again.

Star made a dash through the crowd just as one of the men mounted to the low roof with the end of the lariat in his hand, but before he could fight his way to the spot where the speaker had stood, the place was occupied by a squatty half-breed Indian woman.

When he turned back for Brant a spectacle met his eyes. The sheriff's body was already dangling from the eaves of the log cabin.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE SUNSET GANG.

Star and Brant had finally succeeded in finding Lila and Mrs. Star in one of the shacks. They knew only too well that their poor horses and weapons would not permit of their following the outlaws right away.

The sheriff was buried shortly after. The verdict of "Sudden loss of breath" was rendered by the coroner, and the dead outlaws and sheriff's men, whose bodies were found scattered about the valley, were buried in the same trench a short distance from the main thoroughfare.

The two detectives made a gravestone of a white-washed board, and set it at the head of the trench, and the charcoal inscription printed thereon, composed by Mr. Humphreys, read as follows:

"Sheriff Tom Waller and his entire posse, numbering a score, wiped out by the White Mask Gang, who likewise lost seven members, September 19, 1880."

This, he considered, put the blame where it belonged, and relieved Dead Valley of all responsibility in the matter.

"He probably argued that if the sheriff wasn't killed by the White Maskers, he ought to have been," Star decided, "and in that way he squared the consciences of every native of the valley."

When the sun rose on Dead Valley the next morning there was hardly a trace of the crime visible, and the six o'clock shift in the mines was made as usual.

Mr. Humphreys' first move was to acquaint both the railroad, the express company and the eastern members the mining company of their loss. and then he de-

voted himself to fitting his newly-acquired nephews with a suitable equipment of horses and weapons.

Saddlebags were packed and the country carefully outlined; then, just at sunrise the next morning, he bade a hearty farewell to the party and watched them gallop away on the track of the outlaws.

Their idea was to get an early start before the natives took another notion to form a posse and follow the white masks, for they were still determined to catch Jess unaided.

Whether Black Bart had accompanied the white mask gang they could not tell, but a thorough search through the valley that day had failed to discover him, and the natives concluded that the two had gone together, which looked as though Jess had not succeeded in winning quite all of the other's money.

The two brave fellows were keenly alert and not a bush or rock was passed without close inspection. By noon they were at the Camelian Springs, one of the most verdant spots in Arizona, and here they found unmistakable proof that the outlaw gang was before them, for there was a playing card, two poker chips and a jackknife lying in the grass, while the soil around the spring was deeply indented by horseshoes.

They lunched and spent an hour in the grateful shade, developing their plans to catch Jess and resting their horses.

From the Camelian Springs the robbers could be tracked easily.

There were prints of half-a-dozen horses, and, later on, midway between the spring and the Devil's Gulch, they saw proof that the outlaw gang had been reinforced by a couple of mules and three fresh horses.

"Those mule prints look like business," was Star's comment, after he examined them. "They tell me that the horses were heavily laden, probably with provisions."

"Which shows that Jess intends camping out for a time," remarked his companions. "They can't be far ahead."

"There are shanties in the gulch, so we can stay there all night," said Lila, who was acting as guide for the party. Then she suddenly reined closer, and put her hand on her husband's shoulder.

"I reckon now we'd ought ter bewearin' trousers, too, Mr. Brant," she said, with a merry twinkle in her eyes.

"We could ride a heap better and it would feel more natural."

"A good suggestion! We'll corral some togs for you at the very next stop," laughed Brant.

Star was in the lead. He stopped his horse abruptly.

"Hello! The rascals turned here and have struck east! They've split forces, too!"

Lila urged her horse ahead and sat a minute studying the tracks, then she put her finger to her lips in a warning gesture.

"It's a trick! They've made this trail on purpose!" she whispered, excitedly. "See there! Ther tracks were made by the horses backing. Ther hull push is somewhere's behind us!"

They urged their horses through the bushes to the top of a gentle knoll, and then, shading their eyes, gazed in all directions.

The country was undulating, showing low hills, covered with stunted trees and chaparral, intersected by gorges of no great depth, and badly choked by rugged bits at some time chipped from the mountain boulders.

"A fine place for horse thieves!" said Brant, pointing to one of the cuts between the hills. "What's to hinder an army of them from camping down there?"

"Nothing!" answered Star, who had discovered the end of the tracks; "and that's exactly where they are, if I'm not mistaken!"

A short consultation followed, and then the party decided to camp for a while on the knoll, as the rocks and brush provided them a fair shelter.

"We can observe the enemy from here. When he moves, we'll move," was Star's decision. "There's no use going on till we flush our quarry."

"I see smoke!" broke in Lila, who had eyes like a hawk's. "Look thar, behind ther rocks. They're cookin' their supper!"

"I reckon," said Lila, slowly, "ef it was Jess, he wouldn't have no fire. He'd know better than ter make er smoke so near ther trail—besides, thar's Injuns over yender thet would likely drop in on him when they wasn't wanted."

"I believe Lila is right! Come on!" ordered Brant, promptly.

A wild gallop across the hills followed, and in ten minutes the party arrived at the door of a natural cave,

formed by two boulders, which were tipped together at the top, but separated at the bottom.

Star halloed boldly, but received no answer, so he dropped from his saddle, and, taking a revolver in his hand, went straight to the aperture between the boulders which served as an entrance.

A peremptory "Halt!" and the click of a trigger stopped him.

A second later a man, wearing a beard that reached to his knees and a hat that covered his forehead and eyes completely, appeared at the door of the cave, carrying a cocked weapon.

"Hello, Robinson Crusoe! Who the devil expected to find you in Arizona?" began Star, promptly. "Got any grub to spare? Anything fresh, I mean! If you have we'll trade; there's canned stuff in the saddlebags!"

"You're a cool one," was the answer, as the bearded man took a sharp glance at the party, and then put up his pistol.

"You're wrong there, stranger! I'm hot as Hades! You don't happen to know of a spring about here, do you?"

"See here," said the man, touching his gun again. "Speak your honest errand, stranger, and you'll be treated well. Now what is it? Are you Waller's men? You can't come in here till you answer my question."

Star put his revolver in his belt promptly, and assumed a serious demeanor.

"Waller is dead; he was hung night before last, at Dead Valley, and——"

"Whoop! Hi, thar! Do you hear that, boys!" yelled the man, with a sudden change of voice and accent. "Whoop! Waller is dead! Kin ye believe it, pardners? Come out an' corral ther feller afore he gits erway, an' thar ain't no chance ter make him prove it!"

Three men, bearded like himself, had appeared as he spoke, and in a second they had covered even the young women with their weapons.

Star burst out laughing, but it was only to give Brant a chance to speak, and his chum was prompt to improve the opportunity.

"It's the truth. Jesse James and his gang swooped down upon the valley, and the sheriff after them," he said, soberly. "Some one stole the miners' salaries that the railroad had shipped in a load of codfish——"

"Which was it—Jess or Waller?" broke in one of the men, excitedly.

Brant paid no attention to the question, but went on outlining the occurrence.

"Reckon now we kin give ye a bit of venison," said the first speaker, when he had finished, "but it's only fair to tell ye thet we may tax ye fer ther meal, strangers. Them thar's a fine lot o' critters, an' horse stealin' is our bizness!"

Star and Brant exchanged glances, and then the first detective responded cheerfully.

"We knew that before we called on you, gentlemen. You are members of the Sunset Gang, the biggest horse thieves in the country! When we strung up the sheriff the other night we deprived you of a captain!"

"Haw! Haw! An' done us a good turn, too! Waller was er hard man on er dicker," broke in one of the thieves, "but bein' as ye know us, thar's nothin' more ter say. Ye kin come in ef ye want ter see er hoss thieves' den, strangers!"

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE SUNSET GANG'S NEW MEMBERS.

The detectives and the women had hardly disappeared inside of the cave, with the horse thieves behind them, when Jesse James peered out from a clump of bushes not forty feet from the entrance.

"Well, I'll be d——d!" was his first remark; then gliding through the bushes he joined Frank James and two other members of the gang who were lying flat on their stomachs behind a boulder.

"We've got 'em, boys! Humphreys' two nephews and four of the Sunset Gang in a bunch, not that I've got anything against the gents with the whiskers."

"Hark! There's a sentry outside! I wonder if they think he's bullet proof," chuckled Frank James, softly. "Shall I pepper him, Jess, or ain't you ready?"

Dick Martin, one of Jess's best men, had crept around the boulders as they talked, and now came back with a bit of information.

"They've taken the horses behind the cave, and the sentry is gone."

"Then wait till he comes back! We've got the bulge thar the sapheads! How the deuce do they expect to get to of there when there's only one entrance?"

"I presume they think we cut back to the spring after the scrimmage yonder," laughed Frank. "They felt our bullets, but by the time they could see us, we were backing down the slope and no doubt they think we're backing yet!"

"They'd kill me to get my horse! They don't owe me any grudge," said Jesse James, thoughtfully, "and I'll swear I wouldn't waste a shot on 'em if it wasn't that we need horses. That black beast of yours is about winded, Frank, and as for Dick's mustang, it can't go a foot farther."

"I'd put an end to the two of 'em, if it wasn't for making a noise," said Frank, who had dropped to the ground and was listening intently.

"Wait! We've got no bullets to spare just now," began Jesse, when Frank put up his finger.

"Sh! There's Long Ike, the captain of the Sunsets when Waller ain't around! He's come out to reconnoiter and making straight in this direction!"

"Drop him in his tracks, and then draw a bead on the cave," ordered Jesse James, promptly, after which he took a revolver in each hand and darted into the bushes.

Crack!

A revolver spoke, and "Long Ike" measured his length on the ground; then just as the outlaw expected, another horse thief put his head out of the entrance.

Flash!

Bang!

The bearded face was drawn back so quickly that the bullet struck the rock, then all was silent in the cave for several minutes.

Jesse James had crept through the bushes a distance of a hundred yards until he came to four horses, which were lying upon the ground.

Bending over two of them he dispatched them by plunging a knife into their jugular veins, then he quieted the other two in a masterly manner.

Finishing the detour around the rocks, he found a clearing behind the cave in which stood half-a-dozen fine specimens of horseflesh, as well as the four beasts that the detectives' party had been riding.

The coast was apparently clear, but still the outlaw hesitated. He was too well versed in the ways of horse thieves to think that they would leave their animals unguarded.

While he was peering carefully from behind a rock, he

heard another shot in front of the cave; then Frank James gave him a sharp whistle as a signal.

Darting into the clearing, he mounted the freshest-looking horse, and grabbing another by the mane, he was off like a comet.

A shout and a bullet followed him, but neither stopped him, and a minute later he was joined by Frank James and Dick Martin, who were riding the two horses that he had left in the bushes.

"Tie the odd horse to the sapling yonder, and Black Foot will find it," said Frank, as he dashed by on Jesse James' horse. "The rascals are after us!"

Jesse James had fastened the odd horse while his brother was speaking, and a second later they were galloping up the slope in a position on the knoll, where they could look back and see exactly who was following them.

The spectacle of Black Foot, a half-breed Indian who had belonged to the James gang for some time, being chased by a couple of horse thieves in their direction, was presented to their view.

The three outlaws ranged themselves in a row, and, turning their revolvers toward the oncoming riders, they waited calmly.

"Black Foot always was a lazy cuss! He must have lost time finding the beast," chuckled Jesse James, as he watched the race.

Crack!

Crack!

The horse thieves both fired at once, but as they were still out of range of the outlaw's pistols, they listened for Black Foot to return the compliment.

"What the devil is the matter with the fellow?" growled Jesse James again, and at that second Black Foot turned in his saddle and emptied his weapon at his pursuers.

With a cry of rage one of the long-whiskered fellows dropped from his saddle, but the other, taking careful aim, repaid the shot with interest.

Black Foot reeled, and then pitched violently forward, and at this stage of the game Jesse James gave a low order.

"At 'em, Frank! Riddle 'em both! We need the horses!"

The outlaws dashed back down the hill, but they were a second too late, for the horse thief had suddenly discovered them and was making a break for shelter.

Crack! went Jesse James' weapon at long range, and the horse thief, who had turned at that minute, received a wound in the jaw.

Another shot followed, and then the two outlaws suddenly drew rein. They were almost at the entrance to the cave, and the thief had disappeared inside, leaving his horse to the mercy of his pursuers.

Jesse James backed his horse behind a rock, and Frank sidled over to a tree, while Dick Martin, who had stopped to examine the two bodies, drew rein several feet behind them.

"Lasso the beast, Frank! I'll stand guard!" said Jess, finally.

A horsehair lariat swished promptly through the air and the noose fell directly over the head of the quivering animal that was standing exactly where her master had left her.

"Now, then, pull her in, and we'll be off! I want to make the Gulch before sunset, and we can do that easy," began the outlaw chieftain.

Crack!

Crack!

Two bullets sped from somewhere, and the lariat was severed. Then Jesse James ripped out an oath and drew closer under cover.

"Better get out of this, Jess! There's two of 'em inside!" warned Frank James, uneasily.

"There are six altogether, counting the women," said Jesse James, coolly. "But I want that horse, and I'm going to have it."

Another lariat was uncoiled, and then Jesse James himself swung the coil above his head.

In doing this he was obliged to expose himself for a second, and three bullets whizzed past his ears, each coming from a different direction.

"Ha! ha! The fellows improved their chance to get out of the cave while our backs were turned," he said, quickly; then he began pulling in the lariat, which once more encircled the head of the mustang.

Crack! went another weapon, and then another, both aimed at the strip of horsehair, but this time the bullet missed and went singing across the desert.

Jesse James drew the astonished horse close to him and calmly fastened it to his saddle; then, once more exposing himself to whoever might be hiding in the vicin

ity, he put spurs to his horse and galloped up the knoll with Frank following, and Dick Martin preceding him.

Three shots were fired after them, one cutting an inch from the outlaw king's hat brim, the other two whistling past Frank's ears, and flattening themselves on the boulders.

After that all was silent, and at the crest of the knoll the three ruffians looked at each other in some amazement.

"I reckon they forgot ter bring bullets enough ter reload," suggested Dick. "Thet thar's the only explanation I kin give fer ther rascals not follerin' us."

Jesse James said nothing, but, after a careful look over the hills, he turned his horse once more to the eastward.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE OUTLAW'S RETREAT.

"There's some reason for their not following us, but I reckon Jess is right not to bother about it," said Frank, reflectively.

They rode on in silence for some distance after that, Jesse James turning constantly and glancing over his shoulder.

Another high knoll gave them a good look over the surrounding country, and after ascertaining to his satisfaction that they were not being followed, Jesse James left the beaten path and headed across the hills, winding in and out between the massive rocks, and jumping his horse over smaller obstacles.

At last they reached "The Devil's Gulch," a wide ravine between two rugged hills, in which were located a dozen rude shanties.

These shanties were occupied by a class of outlaws known as "road agents," but their exploits, which consisted principally of stage robbing and cattle stealing had not yet made them as notorious as the gangs already mentioned.

In fact, these hillside ruffians still made a bluff at honest living, and by identifying themselves with some of the gangs of prospectors and traders which visited Arizona frequently, they were able to even baffle the vigilance committees.

Waller had known them all, and stood in with them in their nefarious work of stage-looting, but as he de-

manded a heavy tribute from their spoils, he was by no means a favorite among them.

Arriving in sight of the first shanty, Jesse James made a change in his appearance, and both his brother and Dick Martin followed his example.

The change consisted in tossing their coats into the bushes, leaving them in rough flannel shirts; attaching long beards (such as the members of the Sunset Gang always wore) by means of wires over their ears and then drawing their slouch hats low on their foreheads.

Jesse James laughed as he drew rein before the door of what looked to be a deserted cabin.

"Hold on, Jess! The string is out!" warned Frank James, as his brother leaned from his saddle and struck the door of the cabin a blow with the butt of his pistol.

The outlaw glanced at the tow string that did duty as a latch, then, without a word, rode on to the next cabin.

Here he found two men seated over a plate of canned meat, while a third was busy cleaning the shooting hardware for the trio.

"I'll be cussed ef it ain't ther Sunset Crew, pardners," said one of the men, as he glanced up. "Walk right in and set down! Thar's grub enough, sich as it is, and thar's water fer ther hosses."

The three outlaws accepted the invitation, and, leaving Dick to attend to the animals and keep guard outside the James boys walked in and seated themselves at the banquet.

"A hot ride, pardners, an' a long one, I jedge by yer looks," said the other man, amiably. "Now, what's ther attraction fer you chaps in this hyar section? Thar ain't a sound piece of horseflesh in ther Devil's Gulch, at present!"

"I reckon that thar's right, pardner," said Jesse James, promptly. "An', even if thar was, we wouldn't stand no show ter corral it with you fellers in possession of ther gulch."

A loud laugh followed, and the meat was passed around; then Jess retailed the latest news from Lordsburg and Dead Valley.

"Cut it short, Jess! Thar's some one comin'!" called Dick Martin, putting his head in the door.

The outlaw sprang to his feet, growling an oath at Dick's stupidity in calling him by name, but as no one

seemed to have noticed it he recovered himself instantly.

"Sorry ter leave yer so soon, pardners, but I 'low thet it's time fer me ter be goin'!" he said, as he made a dash across the floor.

He was in time to see Dick leading Fleetwind behind the shanty; then came a yell of surprise from a party of six riders, who had come within a stone's throw of the door.

"The Sunset Gang, as I'm blowed," he muttered, under his breath; then, as usual, the nervy outlaw braced himself for what was to follow.

The men inside, as well as the group outside, had their eyes upon him, so Jess calmly raised his hands above his head, making sundry cabalistic signs, which were supposed to be known only to members of the gang he was disguised to represent.

"Welcome, brothers," he said, solemnly, passing his hand across his heart as he spoke. "The Sunset Gang is on deck, I see! Put up your weapon, pardner! The Gulch holds no enemies!"

The bewhiskered veteran, who acted as leader of the band of six, answered the signs promptly; then, putting his weapon in his belt, he turned to the rest of his party.

"I reckon we've followed the wrong tracks, after all. Thet thar is one on us, pardner, an' ther other chap makes two. They're both as welcome as ther sun, tho' I 'low I can't place 'em, but thet thar ain't strange, an' I reckon they're in ther same perdictament. Now, then, ther oath of ther Sunset Gang is ter stick tergether, an' I reckon yer ain't goin' back on ther oath, if yer be new members, most on yer!"

His eyes twinkled as he spoke, but Jess was too far away to notice it, and the rest of the party began shaking their heads vigorously.

"I 'low thar's safety in numbers," answered the second rider, who was in reality one of the Sunset Gang as well as the first speaker.

"Of course they'll jine us, pardner, an' as many more on 'em as thar chances ter be," remarked the third of the band, with a sharp glance in the cabin. Then he pulled his hat down over his eyes with a hand that trembled just a little with excitement.

A general exodus from the shanty occurred at this minute, and the three natives of the gulch began to look a little uneasy.

"I reckon now thar must be somethin' in ther gulch worth stealin' arter all," began one of them, glumly. "Cussed ef ther whole d—n gang ain't swooped down on us, pardners!"

"Ther cap'in's missin'—Long Ike, I mean. Whar hev yer left him, Bill Prentis?" asked the second native, after a sharp study of the faces.

The leader of the new arrivals answered the question easily:

"Ike and two of ther gang was ter meet us hyar, Dan Custer. I 'lowed now thet thar was him till I got er second look at him."

He pointed toward Jesse James as he spoke, and then looked back over his shoulder, for the outlaw had his eyes on one of the riders whom he had called a "new member."

"Come inside, gents! I 'low yer all friends," said the fellow called Custer. "We ain't organized yet, though I reckon ye've all heerd on us an' I 'low ye've all got er feller feelin' fer beginners!"

The riders slid from their horses instantly, and one by one they filed into the shanty, Jesse James finding something wrong with his saddle that made him the last man to enter.

Just as he reached the threshold, Frank James managed to pass him, and a single whisper explained the whole situation.

"Two of 'em are women. That means that only two are horse thieves, and the other two detectives."

Frank nodded his head, and then they all talked together while Custer dragged another can of meat from a pack saddle that was lying on the ground, and supplemented the viand with a couple of flasks of poor whiskey.

"Now, then, dive in, pardners!" he ordered, jovially. "Every man for himself, and ther devil take ther hindmost."

Jesse James joined in the toast with a wonderful gusto for he was the only one in the room who was really aware of the true situation, and could appreciate the joke in this extraordinary assembly.

CHAPTER XLV.

A FRIGHTFUL EXPERIENCE.

Jesse James' keen eyes had enabled him to penetrate the disguises of the two young women and, after that, it

was easy to guess the rest, and for a time he was master of the situation.

Since his discovery of the papers upon Phil Tyler's person he had kept a sharp lookout for the detective.

Furthermore, the fact that there were two of them, both claiming to be the mine owner's nephews, had puzzled him a little until it suddenly occurred to him to locate Stumpy Jack's recent guests, a thing which was not at all difficult to accomplish. While he was running all this over in his mind, both Star and Brant watched him keenly, but neither was able to penetrate the clever disguise, and there was no opportunity to ask the genuine members of the Sunset Gang what they thought about it.

Custer passed the bottle around, and Jesse James took the first drink. Then, with a flourish, he extended it toward one of the newcomers, who was no one more nor less than Lila, in the disguise of a horse thief.

Brant saw her dilemma and reached for the bottle, but before he could touch it the outlaw's hand was on his pistol.

This was the signal for trouble, and Custer's voice rang out sharply.

"Hold on thar! Ef yer drunk already, ye don't want no more licker! Keep yer hand offir thet thar shootin' iron, stranger! This hyar is er peaceable gatherin'!"

Lila had succeeded in grasping the bottle with a clumsily-gloved hand, and the next second it fell from her fingers, and a howl of anxiety followed it.

"I 'low my fingers air stiff, pardners," said the girl. "Thar's er bullet hole in ther thumb thet makes me er bit onsteady."

Jesse James' eyes twinkled at this exhibition of nerve, but when Mrs. Star picked up the bottle and actually swallowed a good stiff draught without even choking he was ready to applaud the girl's magnificent courage.

"I'll give 'em a chance and see what they'll do," he thought, as he helped himself to a generous slice of beef.

"What's ther news, pardners?" asked Prentis of Frank

James, who happened to be next to him. "We fellers hev been skulkin' from Waller fer a week! Cuss him! He threatened ter haul one on us ter Lordsburg so's ter claim the express company's offer! I 'low yer know what I mean now, don't yer, pardner?"

"Waller's mean enough fer anything! Thar's some one got ter pay fer all ther hold-ups, Bill," was the outlaw's answer. "Every time the express box is looted, Waller is held responsible in a way, an' I 'low he don't keer who suffers so's he gits ther reward, I 'low, tho' he won't go so far as ter run in er Sunsetter."

"I reckon Waller won't do no more damage," broke in Custer, promptly. "Ther old cock was strung up in Dead Valley t'other night. It seems he an' Jess met thar an' both was on ther same lay! Haw! Haw! Ef it's ther truth, I 'low it's just what he desarved!"

There was a general exclamation of astonishment, although every man in the room knew all about the matter, and then Brant asked a question, as if he was greatly interested in the subject.

"Which got ther stuff, pardners—Jess or Waller?"

"Jess, of course! He's ther champion in this section?"

"I'd er thought now ther railroad company would er known better'n ter hev trusted thet thar gold ter Edwards," went on Custer. "He's ther weakest-kneed chicken in Arizona."

Brant and Star had waited as long without saying anything as they dared now, and as it had not yet dawned on them that they were in the presence of the very men whom they were chasing, they launched out into the conversation.

When the bottle was passed around again, Brant attempted to refuse his drink and was passing the bottle by Lila when the outlaw's hand fell once more to his pistol.

"The oath of the Sunset Gang don't allow no refusin' in drink, pardners," he said, grimly. "Thar'll be trouble hyar ef thet bottle ain't emptied! I ain't ther one ter stand no nonsense when it comes ter good licker!"

Brant felt Star's foot against his again, so he promptly took his drink and passed the bottle to Lila.

The poor girl had overcome her nervousness in some degree, but as she was aware that she had more eyes upon her at that minute than ever, she coughed and choked over the swallow of fire water.

"Cuss the stuff! What ther devil is it?" asked Brant, spitting the most of his out.

The last man had had his portion by this time, and the bottle had reached Jesse James' hands, but he set it down promptly and rose to one knee before he answered:

"P'haps, now, ye think ther stuff is drugged," he sneered, with his eyes on the detectives' faces. "P'raps yer think it's somethin' I've concocted myself! Ef yer do, yer kin say so right out, an' be done with it! I reckon ther lickin' kin speak fer itself, an' ef it can't I've got somethin' thet kin speak fer it!"

He jerked a brace of pistols from his belt as he spoke, and covered the detectives' party, while Frank James and Dick Martin each drew a bead on the other occupants of the shanty.

"Throw up your hands, the whole lot of you! I've had enough of this!" bawled Jess, springing to his feet.

"Drop those weapons, you two, and obey orders!" echoed Frank James, clicking the hammers of his two revolver.

"I reckon now's yer chance ter see thet thar hoss ef yer want ter so bad!" added Dick Martin, promptly. "Lead ther way thar, Custer, an' you two other chaps kin foller! Thar won't none of yer be hurt ef ye'll jest obey orders!"

The thing had been done so quickly that the men were speechless, and Custer promptly marched from the shanty with his two companions following him, and Dick bringing up the rear like a United States soldier on guard duty.

"Next! Move swift, and keep your hands high!" ordered Frank James, gruffly.

Prentis and his only genuine brother in the organi-

zation followed the first two, and as Frank James marched behind them, the outlaw brothers smiled at each other.

"Now, then, you four, take off those beards. I want a look at you!" ordered Jesse James. "I reckon I'm right in thinking you are a couple of Pinkerton detectives, and those silent chaps are a brace of plucky women!"

A scream from Lila settled the question of her identity promptly, and then, with trembling fingers, the two girls removed their hats and beards and turned their pale faces toward the outlaw.

"Ha! ha! I thought so! The daughters of old Uncle Ajax and Stumpy Jack!" roared the outlaw, "and the two prettiest lassies I've seen in Arizona!"

"Oh, Lila! It's Jesse James!" gasped Mrs. Star at that minute; then she grew white to the lips as she turned to her husband.

"I reckon you'd better leave the room, ladies! Leave those papers behind and don't dare to touch a trigger," went on the outlaw, more gruffly. "A move on your part will send your husbands plumb to the devil. I'm Jesse James, all right, and this is a happy minute in my existence!"

There was an evil look in his eyes, and he had brushed his hat back so that they could get the full benefit of it, and after a second's hesitation, the two girls rose together.

The next second there was a groan, and Mrs. Star fell like a log, overcome by the liquor she had drank; and, without a thought for herself, Lila knelt beside her.

"You have killed her! Oh, what a monster you are, Jesse James!" she cried, fearlessly. "I would put a bullet through your heart if I could, and I will do it, I swear it, if you harm my friend!"

Star had half risen as she spoke, but he sank back again instantly, with a bullet from the outlaw's weapon cutting a lock of hair from his temple.

"Another move, and you are a dead man! Show your faces!" roared the outlaw.

The detectives lowered their hands cautiously and removed their hats and beards, and the outlaw suddenly found himself confronted by two youthful, honest faces.

"So you are Pinkerton men on the track of Jesse James, are you?" he asked, with a sneer. "You have sworn to do your best to kill me and my brother! Well, you must admit that it don't look just now as though you were likely to do it!"

"You hold the winning hand, Jess," said Star, very coolly. "We would have killed you if we could, but luck has been against us!"

"As it has against every man who has tried to murder Jesse James!" cried the bandit, pompously.

"Now, as the time is passing, I'll just end this particular business! Just oblige me by rising together and moving back against the wall yonder!"

The two young men moved instantly, but like a flash Mrs. Star was before them, her blue eyes flaming fire at the infamous murderer.

"You dare not kill them, Jesse James!" she began, excitedly.

Jesse James waved her aside and raised his two weapons simultaneously.

"Drop, or I'll put the same bullet through the two of you!" he thundered.

"Madge! Move, for God's sake!" cried Star, frantically. "I'm not afraid to die, dear, it is only you——"

"She'll be looked after, later! One, two, three——" began the outlaw.

Mrs. Star did not move a muscle, and she was right in range, but the outlaw started to say "Fire!" and had touched the trigger when she suddenly threw up both hands and gave a shriek of victory.

CHAPTER XLVI.

TO THE RESCUE.

Crack went a weapon outside of the door, and this report was followed by two others in quick succession.

Both of the weapons dropped from the outlaw's hands

without having done any damage, and Jesse James wheeled like a tiger to find himself confronted by Prairie Pete, one of his own gang, holding in his hand a smoking revolver.

Like a flash the outlaw sprang at the man and felled him to the floor, then, dashing over his body, he disappeared around the shanty.

Another volley of shots on the outside sounded at that instant, and then the two detectives grabbed their own weapons from the floor and bounded out of the shanty.

By the time they were out Jesse James was fifty feet from the spot, and they were looking into the barrels of a dozen Winchester repeaters.

"A posse from Dead Valley, as I'm alive!" cried Brant, instantly, as both he and Star recognized Mr. Humphreys. The next second Lila had thrown herself in the arms of Brant, and was clinging to him desperately.

He held her gently in his arms and kissed her again and again before he could quiet her.

What surprised him, however, even in that moment of excitement, was to see the way she responded to his caresses.

Explanations followed promptly, and the posse was off like the wind, leaving the two detectives and Mr. Humphreys behind to look after the women.

"What became of the gang outside?" asked Brant, as soon as the two women had fully recovered. "Frank James and another of the gang were out there and no less than three horse thieves."

Mr. Humphreys shook his head, and then started around the cabin.

"Prairie Pete led us here, telling us that it was Jesse's headquarters," he explained. "If there was any one here they must have bolted when they heard us. That seems strange, too, if Frank James was among them."

"It's too much for me, but perhaps we'll understand it later," said Star. "Now, then, the question is, have they left us any horses?"

"Not one! Mine is the only horse in sight," was the

answer, as Mr. Humphreys completed his inspection of the premises. "You four will have to stay here until I can get a wagon."

"But they may come back," began Lila, timidly.

"I don't think so! There's twelve men in my gang, and Jess had only a fifty-yard start. We thought he was a common horse thief, or he'd never have got by us!"

"We took him for one of the Sunset Gang, too," said Star, sadly, "but we know 'em now, and we ain't likely to forget them!"

"Hello! Prairie Pete is the man who saved us!" exclaimed Brant, who had just thought to look at the prostrate man in the shanty. "He's carried his hatred of Jess so far, I wonder if it'll be a possible thing to revive him."

"Thet thar was a heavy blow! He went down like an ox," said Mr. Humphreys, picking up one of the bottles.

They poured liquor between his lips, and, after a time, the fellow revived and was greatly surprised to find himself once more in the land of the living.

"I 'lowed it was Jess till I looked in," he said, stupidly, "then I reckoned 'twas Long Ike, and I hadn't no grudge ag'in thet thar gentleman, so I 'jest knocked thet pops outter his hand ter keep him frum doin' damage."

"You saved all our lives," Mrs. Star responded, sweetly. "You are the best fellow on earth for saving my husband!"

"Great snakes! You ain't a women, air yer?" he asked, suspiciously.

"That's what she is, and here's another one, and they're the bravest ones on earth," broke in Star, promptly.

Meantime Mr. Humphreys had started off to look for a wagon.

He found something that did duty for one behind one of the other shanties, and, hitching the lone horse into it, they started back up the gulch, Prairie Pete walking by the horse, in company with the detectives.

In that way they traversed the miles that lay between the gulch and Dead Valley, and when they finally arrived there they found news of the posse.

They had kept Jesse in sight for several miles, and then

lost him, but at last they found his trail and tracked him to the very border of Arizona. When he left the State they could not follow him.

They overhauled three members of the Sunset Gang and heard of the death of Long Ike, but not one of the members of the "unorganized gang" which inhabited the Devil's Gulch was identified by any of them, and it was thought that they had betaken themselves to some other section of the country.

How Frank James and Dick Martin escaped no one ever heard, but it was supposed that the three sets of rascals fixed the thing up between them.

Dead Valley was as tranquil as ever during the day that followed their return, and only one death occurred that evening.

That was Prairie Pete, who got into a fight with one of the miners at Slippery Hank's old place, but as he was buried by moonlight the incident occasioned no mourning displays throughout the valley.

The miners were still growling over their lost month in the mines, and the name of Jesse James was more than ever the signal for jeers and curses.

The two detectives only remained there long enough to recuperate their strength, and during that time Brant was married to Lila. The detectives, with their courageous wives, started for Chicago in order to report in person at the famous agency. When Jesse James was next heard from they were both ready to start again, but this time the women were left at home.

The famous outlaw was cutting a wide swath through a brand-new territory, and, as the government's offer still held good, and the amount had been added to by nearly every governor west of the Mississippi, he was still the object of great interest to sleuthhounds.

No man in the world had ever accomplished such daring deeds of infamy as Jesse James, and the White Mask Gang would have lost much of its terror had not citizens far and near known that the famous outlaw was its ruling spirit.

TO BE CONTINUED.

YOUR OPINIONS OF FAMOUS MEN.

Grand Prize Contest



22 VALUABLE PRIZES
GIVEN AWAY.

Here is a chance for every reader of JESSE JAMES WEEKLY.

Boys, you have all heard of the plucky little Kansan who has been making himself famous on the other side of the world.

What do you think of him?

What characteristics do you see in his face?

What has he done, anyway?

What do you think is the best thing he ever did?

The boys who can best answer such questions applying to any famous American, known for his brave deeds, will win handsome prizes.

Here is the plan of one of the most novel contests ever placed before the American boys.

Look up what interesting facts you can find about any famous American. Then write them out in your own words, stating your own opinion of him, his appearance, and the particular achievement which pleases you the most. The first prize will be awarded to the person sending in the most interesting and best written article; the next best will win the second prize, and so on. It makes no difference how short they are, but no contribution must be longer than 500 words.

LOOK AT THE PRIZES.

TWO FIRST PRIZES

The two who send us the most interesting and best written articles will each receive a first-class Camera, complete with achromatic lens, and loaded with six exposures each. Absolutely ready for use. For square pictures $3\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ inches; capacity six exposures without reloading; size of camera $4\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{2} \times 5$ inches; weight 15 ounces; well made, covered with grain leather and handsomely finished.

FIVE SECOND PRIZES

The five who send us the next best articles will each receive a "Sterling" Magic Lantern Outfit, together with 72 admission tickets and a large show bill. Each lantern is 10 inches high, 4 inches in diameter, with a $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch plano-complex condensing lens and a $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch double complex objective lens. Uses kerosene oil only.

FIVE THIRD PRIZES

The five who send us the next best articles will each receive a Hand-some Pearl Handled Knife. These knives have each four blades of the best English steel, hardened and tempered. The handle is pearl, the lining brass, and the bolsters German silver.

For ten next best descriptions, ten sets of the latest and most entertaining Puzzles and Novelties on the market, numbering three puzzles each, including Uncle Isaac's Pawnshop Puzzle; the Magic Marble Puzzle and the Demon Outfit.

This Contest closes December 1. All contributions must be in by that date.

SEND IN YOUR ARTICLES AT ONCE, BOYS.

We are going to publish all of the best ones during the progress of the Contest.

We will have to reserve to ourselves the right of judging which article has the most merit, but our readers know that they may depend upon Street & Smith, and on their absolute fairness and justice in conducting Contests. This one will be no exception to the rule.

REMEMBER!

Whether your contribution wins a prize or not, it stands a good chance of being published, together with the name of the writer.

To become a contestant for the prize you must cut out the Character Contest Coupon, printed in this issue. Fill it out properly, and send it to JESSE JAMES WEEKLY, care of Street & Smith, 238 William Street, New York City, together with your article. No contribution will be considered that does not have this coupon accompanying it.

COUPON.

"JESSE JAMES WEEKLY" CHARACTER CONTEST No. 1.

Date.....1901

Name.....

City or Town.....

State.....

CHARACTER PRIZE CONTEST.

During the progress of the Prize Character Contest this department will be devoted to the publication of the best articles sent in by the contestants.

Here are some of the best ones received so far. They are coming in with a rush, boys, so hurry up and send in your articles as soon as possible.

Lincoln's Debates With Douglas.

(By William L. Thompson, Auburn, N. Y.)

I have not seen any articles in your prize contest on Abraham Lincoln, so I thought I would write about him. What I like best to read about him are the accounts of the debates he had with Senator Stephen A. Douglas, of Illinois.

In 1854, through the influence of Senator Douglas, the Kansas-Nebraska Act was passed, whereby those two States were left to judge for themselves whether they would have slaves or not. But by the Missouri Compromise of 1820, it was expressly stated that slavery should be forever prohibited in this locality. The whole North grew to white heat. When Douglas returned to his Chicago home the people refused to hear him speak. Illinois said, "His arguments must be answered, and Abraham Lincoln is the man to answer them!"

At the State Fair at Springfield, in October, a great company were gathered. Douglas spoke with marked ability and eloquence, and then on the following day Abraham Lincoln spoke for three hours. His heart was in his words. He quivered with emotion. The audience were still as death, but when the address was finished men shouted and women waved their handkerchiefs. Lincoln and the right had triumphed. After this the two men spoke in all the large towns of the State, to immense crowds. The Kansas-Nebraska Bill worked out its expected results. Blood flowed in the streets as pro-slavery and anti-slavery men contested the ground, newspaper offices were torn down by mobs, and Douglas lost the great prize he had in view—the Presidency of the United States.

When the new party, the Republican, held its second convention in Philadelphia, June 17, 1856, Abraham Lincoln received one hundred and ten votes for Vice President, but the Democrats won that year.

When the Republican State Convention met May 9, 1860, at Springfield, Ill., Mr. Lincoln was invited to a seat on the platform, and as no way could be made through the dense throng, he was carried over the

people's heads. Ten days later, at the National Convention at Chicago, though William H. Seward of New York was a leading candidate, the West gained the nomination, with their idolized Lincoln. Springfield was wild with joy. When the news of his success was carried to him he said quietly, "Well, gentlemen, there's a little woman at our house who is probably more interested in this dispatch than I am, and if you will excuse me, I will take it up and let her see it."

The resulting canvass was one of the most remarkable in our history. The South said, "War will result if he is elected." The North said, "The time has come for decisive action." The popular vote for Abraham Lincoln was nearly two millions (1,857,610), while Stephen A. Douglas received something over a million (1,291,574). Well, war came, and we all know how it resulted and how loved and honored the President became, which was all the more intensified by his martyrdom.

"The Hero of New England."

(By Will White, Boston, Mass.)

I noticed your character contest and would like to become a contestant in it. Would an article on Miles Standish be all right? I send you my article, anyway.

Captain Miles Standish was one of the first settlers of Massachusetts, and was called "The Hero of New England." He was a very small man, but he had a very hot and quick temper. He was born in Lancashire, England, about 1584.

Miles Standish was a soldier by profession, and was serving in the Netherlands when the Pilgrims, who later came to America, settled in the Netherlands near the place where he was.

When in the Netherlands he joined the Puritans and came with them to America in the Mayflower.

When the vessel arrived in Cape Cod Bay they decided to explore the bleak shore to find a good landing place, and Standish was among the first to volunteer for the service.

He was the second man who stepped upon Plymouth Rock.

The Puritans were in mortal dread of the Indians, who committed many massacres, and Miles Standish had a great many desperate fights with them.

Two years after the Puritans had landed at Plymouth, Standish was called to protect a new colony of people at Wissagusset (now Weymouth), who had aroused the anger of the Indians by begging and stealing. These people had been sent over by a wealthy London merchant, and most of them were just the opposite of the Puritans.

The Indians came very near massacring them all.

Then Massasoit, an Indian who was friendly to the English, betrayed the conspiracy to the Plymouth people.

Captain Standish started out against the Indians with a small company.

When he arrived he had a pretty hot session with Pecksuot, the Indian chief, who became very insolent.

Pecksuot sharpened his knife in the presence of Standish and said:

"Though you are a great captain, you are but a little man, and though I be no sachem, yet I have great strength and courage."

Standish had about as many men as the Indian, so he waited no longer, but gave the signal for a fight.

His men pitched right in and killed five of the savages.

Standish snatched Pecksuot's knife from him, and drove it into the Indian's body.

From that time on the Indians had great respect for Miles Standish and were careful about bothering the white people when he was around.

Captain Standish settled in Duxbury, Mass., about 1631, and a place near his residence is still called Captain's Hill. During most of his life he was an assistant magistrate of the colony. He lived until 1656

The Celebrated Daniel Boone.

(By Ralph Shouse, Paducah, Ky.)

My ancestors lived in Kentucky, so I desire to enter an article on Daniel Boone, the famous explorer of that State.

I am going to start with the trip he took in 1774, when, with his wife and children, he set out from North Carolina on his third expedition to Kentucky. He was accompanied by his brother, Squire Boone, and the party took with them cattle and swine intending to stock some farms with them when they arrived in Kentucky.

Their bedding and other baggage was loaded on pack horses.

At a place called Powell's Valley, the party was reinforced by another body of emigrants to the West consisting of five families and no less than forty able-bodied men; well armed and provided with provisions and ammunition.

They now went on in high spirits, "camping out" every night in woods under the shelter of rude tents con-

structed with poles covered with bedclothes. They thus advanced on their journey without accident or alarm until the 6th of October, when they were approaching a pass in the mountains called Cumberland Gap.

The young men who were engaged in driving the cattle had fallen in rear of the main body a distance of five or six miles, when they were suddenly assailed by a party of Indians, who killed six of their number and dispersed the cattle in the woods. A seventh man escaped with a wound. The reports of the musketry brought the remainder of the party to the rescue, who drove off the Indians and buried the dead. Among the slain was the oldest son of Daniel Boone.

A council was now held to determine on their future proceedings. Notwithstanding the dreadful domestic misfortune which he had experienced in the loss of his son, Daniel Boone was for proceeding to Kentucky; in this opinion he was sustained by his brother and some of the other emigrants; but most of them were so much disheartened by the misfortune they had met with that they insisted on returning; and Boone and his brother, yielding to their wishes, returned to the settlement on the Clinch River, in the southwestern part of Virginia a distance of forty miles from the place where they had been surprised by the Indians.

Here Boone was obliged to remain with his family for the present; but he had by no means relinquished his design of settling in Kentucky. This delay, however, was undoubtedly a providential one; for in consequence of the murder of the family of the Indian chief Logan, a terrible Indian war, called in history the Dunmore War, was impending, which broke out in the succeeding year and extended to that part of the West to which Boone and his party were proceeding, when they were turned back by the attack of the Indians.

In this war Daniel Boone was destined to take an active part. In his autobiography he says:

"I remained with my family on Clinch until the 6th of June, 1774, when I and one Michael Stoner were solicited by Governor Dunmore, of Virginia, to go to the Falls of the Ohio, to conduct into the settlement a number of surveyors that had been sent thither by him some months before; this country having about this time drawn the attention of many adventurers. We immediately complied with the governor's request, and conducted in the surveyors, completing a tour of eight hundred miles, through many difficulties in sixty-two days."

"Soon after I returned home was ordered to take command of three garrisons, during the campaign which Governor Dunmore carried on against the Shawane Indians."

These three garrisons were on the frontier contiguous to each other, and with the command of them Boone received a commission as captain.

In his autobiography Boone says:

"After the conclusion of this war I, being relieved

from my post, was solicited by a number of North Carolina gentlemen, that were about purchasing the lands lying on the south side of Kentucky River from the Cherokee Indians, to attend their treaty at Wataga, in March, 1775, to negotiate with them, and mention the boundaries of the purchase. This I accepted; and at the request of the same gentlemen, undertook to mark out a road in the best passage through the wilderness to Kentucky with such assistance as I thought necessary to employ for such an important undertaking.

"I soon began this work, having collected a number of enterprising men, well armed. We proceeded with all possible expedition until we came within fifteen miles of where Boonesborough now stands, and where we were fired upon by a party of Indians, that killed two and wounded two of our number; yet, although surprised and taken at a disadvantage, we stood our ground. This was on the 20th of March, 1775.

"Three days after we were fired upon again, and had two men killed and three wounded. Afterward we proceeded on to Kentucky River without opposition, and on the fifth day of April began to erect the fort of Boonesborough at a salt lick about sixty yards from the river, on the south side.

"On the fourth day the Indians killed one of our men. We were busily engaged in building the fort until the fourteenth day of June following, without any further opposition from the Indians."

Boone was afterward captured by the Indians, and was even adopted into an Indian family, and then managed to make his escape.

What I have written are only a few of the wonderful adventures that this famous man went through.

The Man Who Whipped Mexico.

(By Archibald Connor, West Point, N. Y.)

My favorite character in history is Winfield Scott. I always liked his daring, and he was never afraid to say a thing was true if he thought so. An instance of this was shown when he first entered the army and was under General Wilkinson, at Baton Rouge, Louisiana. When that officer left the command there, Captain Scott, as his rank was then, freely spoke of what all the others talked of in whispers—that General Wilkinson was implicated with Aaron Burr in a conspiracy against the Union.

It was true, too, but nevertheless he was suspended from rank and pay for a month, by recommendation of a court-martial.

It was a funny thing, though, that at the end of that time, in June, 1812, when war was declared by our government against Great Britain, he was appointed a lieutenant-colonel.

After the gallant Captain Wool was disabled by wounds at the battle of Queenston, Scott took command there and first won and then lost the battle.

He was made a prisoner, with the greater part of the army.

Scott was exchanged in January, 1813, and joined General Dearborn on the frontier as his adjutant.

He took a prominent part in the capture of Fort George, where he pulled down the British flag. He also served with Wilkinson several months, and was commissioned a brigadier-general in March, 1814.

I think this showed what his superiors thought of him in spite of his previous hard luck.

During the year 1814, he was the hero of a great many exploits on the Niagara frontier, and he was given a gold medal by Congress.

The next great work of General Scott was during the war with Mexico in 1847. He was at the head of the victorious American army when it entered the city of Mexico in triumph in September, 1847.

Although he was a Southerner, they couldn't get him to fight against the Stars and Stripes.

When the Southerners had decided on rebellion, they tried their best to get General Scott to join them. But he could not do it, and did all he could, first to avert the war and then to crush it.

But he was getting old now, and was too feeble to remain at the head of the army. But he lived to see the North win out.

At the time when he left the command of the army he was regarded as one of the greatest military men of the age. He died in 1866 at West Point.

A Famous Indian Chief.

(By George Frost, Alleghany, Pa.)

I see one of the contestants wrote an article about an Indian chief, Tecumseh, I think, so perhaps you will print mine about Pontiac.

Pontiac, the great chief of the Ottawa tribe, although savage and treacherous when aroused, was, in his own forest home, one of the most generous and noble Indians that ever lived, and I read once where it said that if he had been a white man and civilized, his fame would have been very great.

Pontiac, when he first became known to the white man, was ruler of the whole northwest portion of what is now the United States. Where our own city, Cleveland, now stands, Major Rogers first met the great chief, in 1760.

He told Pontiac that the English had taken Canada from the French, and then made a treaty of friendship with him. He would have been true to the terms of the treaty, but the English broke their promises, and Pontiac then commenced to break his.

Then he did the thing that made him famous. He confederated all the Indian tribes of the Northwest into one body to exterminate the English, or drive them from all their posts on the great lakes.

So cleverly were his plans made that the commanders of the Western forts had no suspicion of his conspiracy until all was ready, and the first blow had been struck.

Early in the summer of 1763, within a space of two weeks, all the posts except three in the possession of the English, west of Oswego, fell into his hands.

It was not, till the following spring, a whole year later, that Colonel Bradstreet advanced to the country of Detroit with a strong force.

Then the Indians were in turn defeated. But Pontiac wouldn't give in. He went to the country of the Illinois tribe, where he was murdered in 1769 by a Peoria Indian, who was bribed by an English trader to do the deed, for a barrel of rum.

When he died he wore a uniform presented to him by Montcalm, who thought a great deal of him.

Hunting and Trapping Department.

This department is brimful of information and ideas of interest to the young trapper and hunter. Write us if you have any questions to ask concerning these subjects, and they will be answered in a special column. Address all communications to the "Hunting and Trapping Department."

The "Fool's-Cap" Trap.

Of all oddities of the trap kind there is, perhaps, no one more novel and comical than the "Fool's Cap" crow trap. Crows are by no means easy of capture, in any form of trap, and they are generally as coy and as shrewd in their approach to a trap as they are bold in their familiarity and disrespect for the somber scarecrows in the cornfield.

But this simple device will often mislead the smartest and shrewdest crow, and make a perfect fool of him, for it is hard to imagine a more ridiculous sight than is furnished by the strange antics and evolutions of a crow thus embarrassed with his head embedded in a cap which he finds impossible to remove, and which he in vain endeavors to shake off by all sorts of gymnastic performance.

The secret of the little contrivance is easily told. The cap consists of a little cone of stiff paper, about three or four inches in diameter at the opening. This is embedded in the ground up to its edge, and a few grains of corn are dropped into it. The inside edge of the opening is then smeared with bird lime.

The crow, on endeavoring to reach the corn, sinks his bill so deep in the cone as to bring the gummy substance in contact with the feathers of his head and neck, to which it adheres in spite of all possible efforts on the part of the bird to throw it off.

The cones may be made of a brownish-colored paper if they are to be placed in the earth, but of white paper when inserted in the snow.

It is an excellent plan to insert a few of these cones in the fresh corn hills at planting season, as the crows are always on the watch at this time, and will be sure to partake of the tempting morsels, not dreaming of the result. The writer has often heard of this ingenious device, and has read of its being successfully employed in many instances, but he has never yet had an opportunity of testing it himself. He will leave it for his readers to experiment upon for themselves.

The "Double Ender."

This is what it is called in New England, and it is a great favorite among the boys who are fond of rabbit catching. It is constructed of four boards two feet in length by nine inches in breadth secured with nails at their edges, so as to form a long square box. Each end is supplied with a heavy lid working on two hinges. To each of these lids a light strip of wood is fastened, the length of each being sufficient to reach nearly to the middle of the top of the box. At this point a small auger hole is then made downward through the board. A couple of inches of string is next tied to the tip of each stick, and supplied with a large knot at the end. The trap is then set on any simple principle. The knots are lowered through the auger hole and the insertion of the bait stick inside the box holds them in place. The edge of the bottom board on each end of the trap should be supplied with a tin catch in order to hold the lid in place after it has fallen. No matter from which end the bait is approached it is no sooner touched than both ends fall and "bunny" is prisoner. Like many other of our four-footed game, the rabbit manifests a peculiar liking for salt, and may be regularly attracted to a given spot by its aid. A salted cotton string is sometimes extended several yards from the trap for the purpose of leading them to it, but this seems a needless precaution, as the rabbit is seldom behind hand in discerning a tempting bait when it is within his reach.

The Self Setting Box Trap.

One of the oldest known principles ever embodied in the form of a trap is the following: It is very simple in construction, sure in its action, and as its name implies, resets itself after each intruder has been captured.

It is well adapted for rabbits and coons, and when made on a small scale, may be successfully employed in taking rats and mice. It is also extensively used in the capture of the mink and muskrat, being set beneath the

water, near the haunts of the animals, and weighted by a large stone.

Of course the size of the box will be governed by the dimensions of the game for which it is to be set. Its general proportions should be two feet long and one foot square, both ends being open. A small gate, consisting of a square piece of wood supplied with a few stiff wires is then pivoted inside each opening, so as to work freely and fall easily when raised. The bait is fastened inside at the center of the box. The animal, in quest of the bait, finds an easy entrance, as the wires lift at a slight pressure, but the exit after the gate has closed is so difficult that escape is almost beyond the question.

The wires should be so stiff as to preclude the possibility of them being bent by struggles of the imprisoned creature in his efforts to escape and to insure further strength it is advisable to connect the lower ends of the wires by a cross-piece of finer wire, twisted about each.

The simultaneous capture of two rabbits in a trap of this kind is a common occurrence.

Quail Snare.

Snares or noose traps are among the most useful and successful for the amateur trapper. Outside of the trap itself the young trapper should arm himself with a small, sharp hatchet, and a stout keen-edged jackknife—these being the only tools required. He should also provide himself with a small ball of tough twine, and a pocket full of bait, such as apples, corn, oats and the like, that, of course, depending on the game he intends to trap.

The quail snare consists of a series of nooses fastened to a strong twine or wire. They may be of any number and should either consist of fine wire, horsehair or fine fish line. If of wire, common brass "sucker wire," to be found in nearly all hardware establishments and country stores, is the best.

Each noose should be about four inches in diameter. To make it, a small hoop should be twisted on end of the wire, and the other end passed through it, thus making a slipping loop, which will be found to work very easily. Fifteen or twenty of these nooses should be made, after which they should be fastened either to a stout string or wire, at distances of about four feet from each other.

Each end of the long string supporting the nooses should then be fastened to a wooden peg. After selecting the ground, the pegs should be driven into the earth, drawing the string tightly, so that the nooses are free from the ground.

The ground around the nooses should then be

sprinkled with corn, oats and the like, and the trap is set.

As a general thing, it is advisable to set it in a neighborhood where quails are known to abound, and as they run all over the ground in search of food, they are sure to come across the bait strewn for them, and equally as certain to be caught and entangled in the nooses.

The writer has known as many as six quails to be thus caught at a time, on a string of only twelve nooses.

Partridges and woodcocks will occasionally be found entangled in the snare, and it will often happen that a rabbit will be secured by the device.

The Spring Pole.

This is nearly always used in connection with the steel trap, in the capture of the smaller land animals. It not only lifts the creature into the air, and thus prevents its becoming a prey to other animals, but it also guards against the escape of the victim by the amputation of its own leg. This is a very common mode of release with many kinds of game—notably the mink, marten and muskrat, and for the successful trapping of these, as well as many other animals, the spring and sliding pole are absolute necessities. It is a simple contrivance, consisting merely of a pole inserted in the ground near the trap. The pole is then bent down, and the trap chain secured to its end.

A small, notched peg is next driven into the ground and the top of the pole caught in it, and thus held in a bent position. When the animal is caught its struggles release the pole, and the latter, flying up with a jerk, lifts the trap and its occupant high in the air, out of the reach of marauders, and beyond the power of escape by self amputation. Even in the capture of large game the spring pole often serves to good purpose. The struggles of a heavy animal are often so violent as to break a stout trap or chain, and the force of the spring pole, although not sufficient to raise the animal from its feet, often succeeds in easing the strain, and often thus saves a trap from being broken to pieces. The power of the pole must of course be proportionate to the weight of the desired game.

The Sliding Pole.

The first impulse with almost every aquatic animal when caught in a trap is to plunge headlong into deep water. With the smaller animals, such as the mink and muskrat, this is all that is desired by the trapper, as the weight of the trap with the chain is sufficient to drown

its victim. But with larger animals, the beaver and otter for instance, an additional precaution, in the shape of the "sliding pole," is necessary. This consists of a pole about ten feet long, smoothly trimmed of its branches, excepting at the tip, where a few stubs should be left. Insert this end obliquely into the bed of the stream, where the water is deep and secure the large end to the bank by means of a hooked stick, as seen in our illustration. The ring of the chain should be large enough to slide easily down the entire length of the pole. When the trap is set, the ring should be slipped on the large end of the pole and held in place by resting a stick against it. The animal, when caught, plunges off into deep water, and guided by the pole, is led to the bottom of the river. The ring slides down to the bed of the stream, and there holds its victim until drowned.

The Barrel Trap for Muskrats.

Although steel traps are not generally used, there are several other devices which are equally if not even more desirable. Chief among these is the barrel trap, commonly and successfully employed in many parts of New England, where these animals often exist in such numbers as to render their destruction a matter of necessity.

The above trap consists merely of an old barrel, sunk to its upper edge in the river bank, and about half filled with water. On the surface of the water a few light pieces of wood are floated, over which the bait, consisting of carrot, sweet apple, or turnip, is placed. A trail is then made by dragging a piece of scented meat from the barrel in various directions, and a few pieces of the bait are also strewn along these trails. The muskrats will thus be led to the barrel and will be certain to jump in after the tempting morsels, and their escape is impossible. No less than a dozen muskrats have been thus caught in a single barrel in one night, and a few of these traps have been known almost to exterminate the musquashes in localities where they had previously existed in such numbers as to become a pestilence to the neighborhood.

The skin of the muskrat may be removed by ripping from the under jaw to the vent, and peeling around the eyes and mouth, letting the skin of the legs come off whole, without cutting.

Another common method consists in cutting off the feet, and then ripping with a knife from the front of the lower jaw down the neck and belly to a point a little beyond the forelegs. The lips, eyes and ears are then carefully skinned, and the hide is stripped backwards from the body. In the latter method the bow-stretcher is used.

EXCHANGE COLUMN.

(Notice.—This column is free to all our readers. We can be responsible for transactions made through notices in this column. All offers must be strictly exchange offers, and "for sale" advertisements, or exchanges of firearms, explosives, or dangerous or worthless articles will be printed. Address all communications for this column to "Exchange Column.")

Following are a number of exchange notices which have been recently received for publication in this weekly:

FOREIGN STAMPS.—Chas. A. White, 935 North 4th St. Omaha, Neb., has foreign stamps, cigarette pictures, novels and cigarette cards to exchange for stamps.

TRICKS.—Herman Roth, 777 Second Av., New York, has \$20 worth of tricks, one pair of ice skates, and other things to exchange for a bicycle or best offer.

BOOKS.—Will M. Lewis, Lisle, N. Y., has books and novels to exchange for tobacco cards. Story papers for foreign stamps.

FOREIGN STAMPS.—Albert Kloebe, Jr., care Jesse James Weekly, will give ten foreign stamps for every foreign coin sent him.

READING MATTER.—Raymond Dunton, Winterport, Me. has reading matter to exchange for old type. Rubber preferred.

BOUND BOOKS.—Grafton J. Green, Watertown, N. Y., has bound books to exchange for best offer.

STAMPS.—Victor Gubler, 1324 Frankford Av., Philadelphia, Pa., has foreign and United States stamps, and cigarette cards to exchange for a printing press or best offer.

PAPERS.—R. L. Wheeler, care Jesse James Weekly, has papers tags, recipes, cigarette cards, paperheads, and novels to exchange for coins, stamps, relics, minerals, curiosities, etc.

MUSIC STAND.—John Easler, Camden, N. J., has a music stand and tambourine to exchange for best offer.

BOOKS ON STENOGRAPHY, TYPEWRITING AND REPORTING AT REASONABLE PRICES.

In response to very many requests for books on the subjects of stenography, typewriting, reporting, etc., we have made an arrangement with a large publishing house whereby we are enabled to offer the following books to the readers of this weekly at remarkably cheap rates.

Those wishing to take up the study of Stenography, or who desire additional books on the subject, will find every phase of the subject treated in the books here offered. Following is the list:

Manual of Phonography.....	cloth,	\$1.00
Phonographic Reader.....	paper,	.25
Phonographic Copy-Book.....	paper,	.05
Phonographic Second Reader.....	paper,	.25
Reporter's Companion.....	cloth,	1.00
Phonographic Dictionary [old edition].....	cloth,	2.50
Phrase Book [old edition].....	cloth,	1.00
Phonographic Dictionary and Phrase Book [revised and consolidated].....	cloth,	3.00
Business Letters, No. 1.....	paper,	.25
Plain Talk.....	paper,	.25
Ward's Dictator.....	cloth,	1.00
Herrand Campbell's Stenographer's Dictation and Form Book.....	cloth,	1.50
Phonography: What It Is and What It Does.....	paper,	.03
Longley's Remington Typewriter Lessons.....	paper,	.50
Longley's Calligraph Lessons.....	paper,	.50
Longley's Smith Premier Typewriter Instructor.....	paper,	.50
Longley's National Typewriter Instructor.....	paper,	.50
Longley's Yost Typewriter Instructor.....	paper,	.50
Longley's Scientific Typewriter Instructor.....	paper,	.50
Fuller's Touch Writer—Shift-key edition.....	paper,	.50
Fuller's Touch Writer—Double-keyboard edition.....	paper,	.50
Baby Talk.....	paper,	.25
Game of Shorthand.....	box,	.75
Divided Proverbs.....	box,	.50
Clark's Teaching of Shorthand.....	paper,	.25
Thorne's Practical Court Reporting.....	cloth,	1.00
Brown's Mastery of Shorthand.....	paper,	.35
How Long: A Symposium.....	paper,	.50
How Long: A Symposium.....	cloth,	.75

These books will be sent to any address, postpaid on receipt of price. Address all orders to

STREET & SMITH, 238 William Street, New York City.

JESSE JAMES STORIES



Jesse James.

WE were the first publishers in the world to print the famous stories of the James Boys, written by that remarkable man, W. B. Lawson, whose name is a watchword with our boys. We have had many imitators, and in order that no one shall be deceived in accepting the spurious for the real, we are now publishing the best stories of the James Boys, by Mr. Lawson, in a New Library entitled "The Jesse James Stories," one of our big five-cent weeklies, and a sure winner with the boys. A number of issues have already appeared, and these which follow will be equally good; in fact, the best of their kind in the world.

STREET & SMITH, Publishers, New York.

NICK CARTER STORIES



Nick Carter.

THE best known detective in the world is Nick Carter. Stories by this noted sleuth are issued regularly in "Nick Carter Weekly" (price five cents), and all his work is written for us.

It may interest the patrons and readers of the Nick Carter Series of Detective Stories to know that these famous stories will soon be produced upon the stage under unusually elaborate circumstances. Arrangements have just been completed between the publishers and Manager F. C. Whitney, to present the entire set of Nick Carter stories in dramatic form. The first play of the series will be brought out next fall.

STREET & SMITH, Publishers, New York.

BUFFALO BILL STORIES

The only publication authorized by the Hon. Wm. F. Cody (Buffalo Bill).



Buffalo Bill.

WE were the publishers of the first story ever written of the famous and world-renowned Buffalo Bill, the great hero whose life has been one succession of exciting and thrilling incidents combined with great successes and accomplishments, all of which will be told in a series of grand stories which we are now placing before the American Boys. The popularity they have already obtained shows what the boys want, and is very gratifying to the publishers.

STREET & SMITH, Publishers, New York.

DIAMOND DICK STORIES



Diamond Dick.

THE celebrated Diamond Dick stories can only be found in "Diamond Dick, Jr., the Boys' Best Weekly."

Diamond Dick and his son Bertie are the most unique and fascinating heroes of Western romance. The scenes, and many of the incidents, in these exciting stories are taken from real life. Diamond Dick stories are conceded to be the best stories of the West, and are all copyrighted by us. The weekly is the same size and price as this publication, with handsome illuminated cover. Price, five cents.

STREET & SMITH, Publishers, New York.